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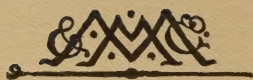
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FAITH OR FEAR ?



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TORONTO

FAITH OR FEAR ?

An Appeal to the Church of England

BY

DONALD HANKEY, "A Student in Arms,"
WILLIAM SCOTT PALMER, HAROLD
ANSON, F. LEWIS DONALDSON, and
CHARLES H. S. MATTHEWS (Editor)

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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PREFACE

THE basis of this book is fourfold : (1) a common devotion, shared by every one of its authors, to the Church of England, the spiritual home of them all, in which each in his own measure has found the supply of his spiritual needs ; (2) a common sense of the really tragic failure of the Church to meet the needs of the nation in the hour of crisis through which it is passing, which has set them to discover, if it may be, some of the causes of that failure ; (3) a common feeling that unless the Church really repents—that is, changes her whole mind, her whole outlook upon life, for that surely is what *μετάνοια* involves—the National Mission of Repentance and Hope, to which her leaders have summoned her, can result, in the long run, in nothing but failure and disappointment ; (4) a common conviction that if the Church has the faith and courage to undertake this drastic business of self-reformation, there lies before her a really magnificent opportunity—perhaps the most magnificent which has ever been

given to her by God in the course of her long and chequered history.

On this common basis each author has made his contribution to the book, in complete independence of all the others.

While this book was passing through the press the *Westminster Gazette* on June 21st, under the general title "What is Wrong with the Churches?" published a remarkable article on "The People and the Church," by Sir Harry Johnston. In that article the writer speaks of the "partial frankness" of certain of the leaders of the Church in discussing the relation of the Church and the People. He goes on to declare that the reason why people stay away from Church—a reason "which no professional clergyman or pastor will admit—is that much of the traditions, teachings and precepts of the Christian Churches are entirely out of date." Those who read this book will see that its authors are to a great extent in agreement with this writer, and at the same time will probably acquit them of the charge of being only "partial" in their frankness.

It remains to add that no one of the authors is in any way committed to the opinions expressed by any other. What measure of agreement has been arrived at is the result of almost completely independent thought and work. The writers are

not in all cases personally known to one another, or even to the Editor. But surely it is one of the signs of the times that everywhere men and women, of widely different temperament and training, are coming independently to certain common convictions as to the causes of the failure of organised religion, and are feeling after something in the nature of that inclusive Catholicity which will be found to be the faith shared by the writers of this book.

In this faith and in the hope that it may serve, in however small a degree, to further the work of the Master Whom they all desire to serve and of His church in this land, the authors send forth their little book.

C. H. S. M.

St. Peter's Day, 1916.

NOTE

WE have taken advantage of the call for a reprint to make a few corrections in the text. Of these the only ones of importance are on pages 22 and 230. Both of these corrections are due to a desire to remove not unnatural misunderstandings of the position of the writers, by the kindly critic who reviewed our book in the *Nation*—misunderstandings no doubt shared to some extent by other readers.

C. H. S. M.

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INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT SITUATION

BY THE EDITOR

THERE never, surely, was a time when a deeper interest was being taken in religion, when men were seeking more eagerly for that sure foothold, among the changes and chances of this mortal life, which a vital religion alone can give. Everyone who has a living message to deliver is absolutely certain in these days to receive an attentive hearing. There is far less professed atheism or even professed agnosticism to-day than there was twenty or thirty years ago. To that fact competent observers have borne unmistakable witness. The one subject which really interests every thoughtful person is religion. That many people are eagerly expecting a religious revival is beyond dispute. A recent inquiry by a body of Anglican clergy and laity, including men and women of all schools of thought, as to whether such a revival was expected or desired, elicited from people of all sorts, men and women, university dons and ordinary parish clergy, the reply that such a revival was desired,

was expected, and that, in the judgment of some of the writers, it had even begun to take place.¹

Yet, on the other hand, there is equally unmistakably a feeling that somehow or other the Church is failing to meet the needs of those who are turning, as it seems, so wistfully to her. The attendance at the services she provides is little, if at all, larger than before the war. When war broke out, men did indeed crowd to church for a few weeks, but gradually the attendances fell away, until now, on every side, the clergy are found lamenting that the wave of religious emotion has spent itself. Various explanations are given, by the clergy and by ecclesiastical journalists, for this failure on the part of the Church to hold those who, at all events temporarily, turned to her for help. It is said, no doubt with a measure of truth, that it was *mere* emotion which caused our churches to be crowded in the early days of the war, and that emotion inevitably spends itself, and therefore the subsequent falling off was only to be expected.

Moreover, deplorable as it may seem, the party spirit is still so strong within the Churches that you may hear Catholics saying that if only the people had had sound Catholic teaching and had grown accustomed to Catholic ritual in their youth all would have been well, and on the other hand you may hear the Protestant asserting as roundly that there would have been no falling off if our Churches had continued

¹ See *The Challenge*, December 10th, 1915, and the following weeks for a summary of the replies received to the Anglican Fellowship inquiry, published under the title of "The Need of Spiritual Awakening. A Symposium."

to be, as in the "good old days," strongholds of Protestantism—and both parties agree together on one point alone, and that is that the masses of the people are really Godless, whether because they are merely ignorant or because they are "Gospel-hardened."

There is another possible explanation of the facts which is less commonly advanced, and one which it is the whole purpose of this book to suggest. It is this : that the Church—and I use the term in the widest possible sense, to cover all forms of organised Christianity—is failing simply because she is failing to bear witness to the living Christ : the Redeemer and Saviour of men. "I, if I be lifted up," says the Christ of the Fourth Gospel, "will draw all men unto me." It is true that religious emotion may spend itself if it does not find its true satisfaction. If, on the other hand, it does find that which it seeks, emotion passes on into settled convictions. The war gave the Church its greatest opportunity. The Church failed to seize that opportunity just because she was not ready for it.

We are living in a day of salvation, which is also, as has ever been the case, a "day of judgment." Judgment has begun "at the house of God," as St. Peter warned us that it would. We are reaping as we have sown—our impotence is the measure of our sin. All this seems to us plain beyond dispute.

Two other things seem as plain. First, it is to us a thing absolutely incredible that Christianity can fail. Christianity is that true spiritual religion which is immortal. It may seem to fail, but it will arise

out of seeming failure more powerful than before. That which is of God is indestructible, nay, more, it goes from strength to strength. The witness of history and the witness of the experience of the individual soul, alike proclaim this truth. The cry, "The Faith is in danger," which so often resounds through the Churches, is the most utterly faithless cry ever uttered by the lips of men. How often the living Christ seems to be saying to faithless disciples, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken : Ought not Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory ? "

Christianity cannot fail. But what does fail, over and over again, is the outward and visible form in which the spirit is incarnate. That must perish because the truth must spread abroad. It cannot endure limitations when those limitations have served their purpose and accomplished their appointed work. No really faithful soul can ever be pessimistic about the ultimate future of Christianity among men. "I know," he will say, "Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

But, secondly, it would seem to follow as a necessary corollary that we ought to expect the external form in which the Spirit manifested Himself to a particular age to perish when its work is done. The living Christ cannot be for ever subject to the limitations which were necessary to the fulfilment of His mission in some particular place, at one particular period, still less can He be kept fettered by the ceremonies which, bound round Him by however reverent hands and with

whatever lavish offering of sweet spices, are necessarily discarded so soon as their temporary purpose is served.

Christ lives—but still, alas ! too many stand weeping by the empty tomb, grieving for a past which never can come back, all blind to the better future which is already dawning. While unexpected angels ask once again the reproachful question, “Why seek ye the living among the dead ?”

The “good old days,” however good they were, can never return—the days to come are really better days. Sentiment clings to the dead past ; faith rooted in a progressive experience, in which the best wine has ever been kept until the last, and the darkest hour has ever preceded the dawn—dawn, more glorious than any sunset, because more full of the promise of life—looks eagerly to the future and is content to wait for the fulfilment of the sure promises of the past.

It follows that if we are pessimistic about the future of our particular form of religion it must be because we have clung to the perishing external form and lost the vital spirit which alone gave to that form its temporary value.

True faith is open-eyed and quite fearless. It is this truth which the title of our book is intended to emphasize. Faith looks for that which is true, not merely for that which is pleasant. It is ready to welcome Him Who comes ever to those who expect Him and comes ever in unexpected ways. It is ready to discard the external when it has done its work and to devise new forms under the guidance of the living Spirit. In every age of crisis there are some whose faith fails altogether

—others who, like Thomas of old, seek to impose upon the living reality unnecessary tests, suggested by what they have seen in the dead past. Even the really faithful are often sorely perplexed ; they have difficult decisions to make ; they have to decide what in the old is essential, what may now be discarded.

The task is an anxious one, but we have no right and no need to be timorous. Our Master gave His disciples principles—the principles on which His own life's work was based—to work out. He promised them the Spirit to be their guide in the experimental work which lay before them. We know those principles, we have that Spirit. It is a Spirit, not “of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” It is good to be alive now, just because the times are so difficult. Now, when, more than ever before, “men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth,” we, sure in our principles, humbly trusting in the guidance of the Spirit, cannot but hear the Voice saying : “Look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.”

PART I

THE CHURCH AND THE MAN

By DONALD HANKEY

Author of "The Lord of All Good Life," "A Student in Arms."

CHAPTER II

A PERSONAL EXPLANATION

THE object of these papers is to try to help find out how we can make the Church a better, a more efficient, a more vital, a more healthy body for Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a subject which no one who loves the Master and reveres Him as the Son of God can approach without a feeling of the greatest diffidence, the most utter humility, the most searching self-criticism. For the member who has himself failed, as we have all failed, to criticise the failure of the body is a task from which anyone may well shrink. Moreover, the reader will naturally want to know what sort of a person it is that is daring to criticise, what credentials he has. Therefore the Editor has asked me to write a personal preface to my contributions, so as to give the reader some chance of forming an opinion as to what weight to attach to my ideas. No one likes to be accused of egoism, and it does seem egotistical to write about oneself; but the request seems so reasonable that I am going to take the risk, and try to comply with it.

In my boyhood I learnt to connect Churchmanship with all that was good and noble in life. My mother

was a devout Churchwoman, and she was also a very humble, very unselfish woman, giving herself up completely to her husband, her children, and the poor and unfortunate among her neighbours. My father, though a layman, was a great reader of theology, and as a proof of his breadth of view I may mention that his favourite writers were Maurice, Robertson, Haweis, Dale, Westcott, and McLeod Campbell. I never learnt to connect religion with narrowness, or with smug self-satisfaction, or with harsh judgments of others, because these features were wholly absent from the religion of my home.

When I was sixteen I lost my mother, and went to the R.M. Academy, Woolwich, afterwards obtaining a commission in the Royal Garrison Artillery. In the six years which followed I learnt something of the average immorality of the unreligious man, which disgusted me, and of the scepticism that is embodied in the publications of the Rationalist Press Association. At last, when I was in a distant tropical colony, I found that I was on the brink of materialistic determinism. I hated it ; but my belief in the Bible as the word of God had been shattered, and the pygmy insignificance of man considered as a purely physical being had sunk into my soul. Just as I had almost decided that the only honest thing to do was to abandon all pretence of religion, I had an experience which revealed to me once for all that it was impossible for me to deny the reality of the human soul, and the effective existence of men's conscience and reason and emotions. I suddenly realised that man was not only of pygmy insignificance by reason of his short life and

limited strength, but that he was also, by virtue of his unique self-consciousness, immeasurably greater than any purely physical organism. He was at once an insect and a god in comparison with the rest of the universe. I can best sum up my thought in a doggerel verse that I wrote at the time :—

Am I an atom in a soulless scheme,
My body real, but my soul a dream ?
Ah yes, ah yes, but how explain the birth
Of dreams of soul upon a soulless earth ?

I have never found another answer but that of Christ, that if man is the son of nature he is also the son of God, his Father in heaven.

From that day I was a theist. It was something, but not enough. A mere abstract belief that God exists is not of much practical use to anyone. I longed for something more inspiring, and one day this sentence flashed across my mind: "If you would know Christ, behold He is at work in His vineyard." I took the vineyard to mean poorer England, and at the earliest opportunity I resigned my commission with a view to becoming a slum parson. I was advised to go to a university, and in due course went to Oxford and read the Honours school of theology. Oxford proved stimulating intellectually. I did not consort very much with what we irreverently designated "the Pi Push," feeling that I should learn more by making friends outside the circle of those who were intending to be ordained. I learnt to reconcile Genesis and the "Origin of Species," or rather to read the one without being worried by recollections of the other. I learnt to love the prophets and the epistles, and to find in the

study of Comparative Religion a strong reason for believing in the especial inspiration of both Judaism and Christianity. I learnt to be intellectually a Modernist, and to find that I could be a Christian without doing violence to my intellectual honesty. But I did not learn a gospel for ordinary men. My religion was still mainly an intellectual matter, and not inspiration or power or love.

After a holiday in the wilds of Africa, and in Madagascar, I went to a clergy school, where I first saw parochial life at close quarters. What I saw alarmed me. I felt that I had no gospel for the working man, and that the life of a clergyman offered after all no prospect of usefulness to me. I funked it, and went instead to a Mission in poorer London. I went as a layman and not as a clergyman, as a learner rather than as a teacher.

It was there that I remembered the sentence which had come to my mind many years before. It was at the bedside of a boy dying of consumption that I felt for the first time that I had realized the presence of Christ, working in His vineyard. As time went on, however, I felt more and more that I could not preach to these working boys until I had in some way shared their life in a degree far greater than was possible as a manager of clubs. Everything was so easy for me and so hard for them that I simply could not preach to them without feeling a hypocrite. At the same time, it was obviously impossible to become a working man in England. At last I determined to try to become one in Australia, and took a passage in the steerage of a German liner. There I slept in a part

of the hold which was fitted up to accommodate more than two hundred men. The men who slept above and below and round me were mostly Welsh miners, and in the following five weeks I learnt a good deal about human nature in the rough. On arriving in Australia I found it much harder than I had expected to become a working man. I worked in all for about six months in the bush, and learnt a little of what it means to do hard manual labour in pretty rough surroundings. At the same time, it was not quite what I had hoped for, and in the end the call of the fleshpots became too insistent, and I became a journalist roaming about Australia in search of copy.

After this half-success I returned to London, and again lived near the Mission, and helped to run a boys' club. My year of wandering had taught me a good deal, and I found myself able to write a book¹ which was an attempt to express in simple language and for simple people a Modernist Gospel. I was also allowed to prepare twelve boys from my club for Confirmation, an experience which I shall never forget, and which led to at least one friendship which I do not think will end.

Then came the war, and I enlisted in Kitchener's Army. I spent nine months in England and three at the front in the ranks, and feeling that I had learnt a little more I spent my time in hospital writing the first of the *Spectator* articles which have since been published under the title "A Student In Arms." Since then I have held a commission.

Looking back, I think that during my first years in

¹ "The Lord of All Good Life." (Longmans. 2s. 6d.)

the army I was learning disillusionment, the degradation of man under the influence of a pessimistic determinism. During the past five years I have been slowly learning what appears to me a sane idealism, and the wonderful potentialities of man for unselfishness and courage and nobility when he is under the influence of a sane and genuine religious faith. I speak not of what I have myself attained, but of what I have seen in other men and women, more particularly in those who have been faced with misfortune and suffering. It is they who have taught me more than anyone else to believe and to hope and to aspire. As I write now I have absolutely no doubt of the power of Christ to transform character and life, to change the poor physical pygmies that we men are into beloved sons of God and inheritors of life eternal. And that is why I feel bound to do what I can to try to increase the vitality and efficiency of Christ's body the Church, that it may prove in the future a more adequate medium for the exercise of His wonderful power and love than it has been in the past.

CHAPTER III

AN AVERAGE MAN'S BELIEFS

THE Average Man is not a Churchman. That is a statement that needs qualifying. Legally he is a Churchman—he has been baptized. Actually, however, he would not claim the title unless for census purposes, or on enlistment, he had to state definitely that he was something or nothing. He is not an Atheist. He has a religion of a sort. He feels that he is more “C. of E.” than anything else. But he does not go to church. He does not pray. He does not believe the creeds. He does not attempt to regulate his life by the Church’s moral law. To all intents and purposes he is not a Churchman.

He has a religion of a sort ; but he would be hard put to it if he had to explain what it was. His beliefs are unformulated. Even his code of morals and conduct generally is an unwritten one. We must try to formulate it for him. To do so is not easy. You can’t deduce the average man’s religion from his actions or character. Religion, when it is as nebulous as his, does not rule a man’s life. The clue is rather to be found in the qualities which he admires, despises, or detests in other people. He has an ideal ; but it

is other people rather than himself that he judges by the standard of that ideal. Himself he does not judge—chiefly because he has never learnt to pray.

The Average Man admires courage, generosity, practical kindness, single-minded honesty, persistence in trying to do the right thing.

The Average Man despises meanness, physical fear, moral cowardice, instability, equivocation, narrow-mindedness, subservience to mere rank or wealth or power.

The Average Man hates “swank,” cant, and cruelty.

These are the kind of things that the Average Man admires, despises, or hates. His ideal is a man who possesses all the qualities that he admires, and is free from all the defects that he despises or hates. Funnily enough, so far as it goes, his ideal is strangely like the ideal of the gospels. Moreover, it is the possession of this ideal that is the Average Man’s religion, in so far as he has one; so that one would expect him to be some sort of a Christian. So he is, in a rather ineffective way. And he recognises the fact by calling himself “C. of E.” when he enlists.

But is the Average Man’s ideal really much like the ideal of the gospels? He admires courage. Is courage a Christian virtue? Surely. The only fear that Christ countenanced was the fear of those who have power to kill the soul. The faith which Christ preached made fear an impossibility. The disciples feared the storm because they had not faith. Christ did not fear the storm. The disciples were afraid of the Pharisees, the Priests, Herod, public opinion; Jesus was not. He had faith; they had it not. The disciples were

anxious about ways and means. They feared starvation and nakedness. Jesus did not. He had faith; they had it not. Jesus Christ feared absolutely nothing, because He had faith in the love and power of God the Father, and He felt certain that as long as He loved and obeyed His Father no real harm could happen to Him. The faith of Jesus was a perfect love of the good God, and perfect love casteth out fear. Courage is a fundamental Christian virtue. Fear is the first false god from whose power the gospel frees us.

Generosity and practical kindness—are these Christian virtues? It is hardly necessary to answer. Jesus was described as a man who “went about doing good.” If the first law of the kingdom was to love God with all one’s faculties, the second was to love one’s neighbour as oneself. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Do to others as you would they should do unto you. Love your enemies—which means want to make them your friends; want them to alter, so that friendship between you may be possible; pray for that. Be willing to give anything—even your life. This is all in the gospels, as everyone knows.

What about single-minded honesty? Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay. Seek the kingdom, and let other things follow; and seeking the kingdom means seeking for the things of God—justice, mercy, love, truth. Dishonesty and equivocation are always the fruit either of fear or of selfishness. The man who has the courage of faith and who loves his neighbour as himself will never be guilty of either.

Persistence? Be not weary in well-doing. In-

stability is incompatible with either real faith or real love.

Was ever anyone less narrow-minded than Christ? He feasted with publicans and sinners. He healed lepers. He forgave harlots. He foretold the conversion of the Gentiles. He ridiculed narrow laws and prejudices at every turn. You cannot be narrow if you have once known and loved the Heavenly Father.

As for "swank" and cant, and snobbish subservience to rank and wealth, they were the very things that Christ loathed and fought against most of all. When the disciples boasted, He set a child in their midst, as an example of humility. He told the Pharisees that their self-satisfied righteousness was nothing but cant, and that it set them far further from the kingdom of heaven than any amount of downright sin.

No, there is not a single feature of the Average Man's ideal which is not part and parcel of the ideal which Jesus Christ taught and embodied. And once you have understood His point of view, His sense of perspective, all these features are seen to be necessary, inevitable, and comprehensible. Once realise the greatness of God, as Christ realised and taught it, and the littleness of man follows. Once realise the fatherly love of God, as Christ realised and taught it, and the greatness of man follows—his real greatness. And from that vision of the greatness and the love of God all courage and love towards men, and humility, and honesty, and independence follow with irrefutable logic.

Now, you Average Man, how is it that, since Christ

fulfils and embodies and explains your ideal, you are not enrolled under His banner? Why not range yourself under the standard of the Cross with the rest who are trying to embody Him?

“Why quarrel about a name,” you say, “if I am following the same ideal? Did not Christ Himself say, ‘He that is not against us is for us’?”

But what I complain about is that though you have an ideal you don't make any real attempt to follow it out. Don't you realise that your talk of courage is all humbug, and that you are actually living the life of a toady—a toady to convention and class prejudice and public opinion? Don't you realise that your talk of generosity is all cant, and that you are actually living the most selfish life imaginable, thinking of nothing so much as of your own comfort and position and reputation? Don't you realise the cruelty of your profit-mongering and your immorality? Don't you see that your pleasures are bestial, and that your morals are dragging down the whole race? Pull yourself together. If you believe in your ideal, for goodness sake try to follow it out.

What? You don't want to “set up to be good”? You know you can't succeed, do you? What's that? However much you try, death and fate will mock you in the end? Ah, my friend, what you need is religion, after all. It is no good having an ideal unless you are an optimist, and you can't be a rational optimist without believing in God. You can't believe in God? Why, man, the very fact that you can't make a decent fist of life without this belief in God, this rational basis of optimism, is surely a sufficient proof of its truth!

You don't see that you are any worse than the average Churchman, and you don't see that going to church is going to bring you any nearer to your ideal ? That is the point, is it ? Do you believe in Christ ? Yes. Do you believe in the Church which is His body ? No. Well then, join the Church so that you may be in a position to improve it !

You won't ? I know one reason, O average man ! You are human, you have passions, you have given way to them, and you don't believe in your ability to conquer them. Yet stay and consider. In Christianity marriage is a holy thing—the consecration to God's service of God's greatest gift to men, the power of creation : a holy partnership in which the Great Giver of Life is a third. Is not that your ideal, too ? Don't you agree that you would be better and happier if you tried to live up to it ? If so, it is up to you to try to live up to your ideal, and to be pure up till marriage so that your marriage may be really holy. It is a poor thing to have an ideal and not to try to live up to it ; and, mind you, this is all that Christ asks of you—to go on trying hopefully. You very likely can't succeed right away, but if you go on trying hopefully, and genuinely hating your failure, you are a Christian.

CHAPTER IV

THE TROUBLES OF AN AVERAGE LAYMAN

AN Average Man came to the conclusion that it was up to him to become a Churchman. Jesus Christ was his ideal after all. If he could embody even a little bit of Jesus, that was good enough. So he came to Communion and found in the breaking of bread and in the drinking of the wine the symbols of the very essence of his faith. He knelt and said, "Lord Jesus, I want to be a bit of Thee. I want to show a little bit of Thee to the world. I want to offer Thee my body to be a member of Thy Body, that it may show to the world a little of Thy Spirit. O Lord Jesus, it is a wretched thing that I offer Thee. Yet Thou canst use it if Thou wilt, and purify it for Thy purpose." And the Lord Jesus gave to him bread and wine, and said, "Dear brother, thy gift I accept. So long as thou offerest it, I will receive it, and will live again in the world in thee and in thy brethren. Take this bread, it is My token that thou art a member of My body. Take this wine. It is the token that while thou offerest thyself to Me, My Spirit shall live in thee, and show itself to the world." And to all that were assembled there the Lord said, "By this

shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." And they all went their ways, and did not meet till the following Sunday.

The Average Man had become a layman, and he was at once profoundly happy, and profoundly discontented. On the one hand he was clear about his ideal. He was trying to follow it, and finding an altogether unexpected joy in doing so. On the other hand, he did not find in the visible and organised Church that fellowship, that straightforward simplicity, that sure help, which he had been led to expect.

At the very start he had been discouraged. It was found that after all he had never been baptized. At first he was rather glad of this. He said as much to the parson.

"Padre," said he. "I'm glad of this. It's a chance to get things square. I want to be quite clear about the proposition that I am taking up. I want to stand up before you and my witnesses, and to say quite plainly to them that I want to fight beneath the Cross, the standard of Jesus Christ ; that I want to be a member of His body, and to do my bit towards showing Him to the world. I want to say that I don't believe in selfishness and material ambition, and that I do believe in goodness, and honesty, and love, and freedom."

"M'yes," said the parson. "We shall have to use the service for the baptism of such as be of riper years."

"What's that ?" asked the Average Man in alarm.

"Here it is," said the parson, handing him a prayer-book open at the place.

The Average Man began to read it.

"I say," he protested. "Why drag in Noah and

the Red Sea ? I don't think I quite believe in them, you know ! ”

“ That's all right,” said the padre. “ You haven't got to.”

“ Well, but can't you leave them out ? It seems to make the thing unreal somehow.”

The Average Man read on.

“ I say,” he said again. “ This is awfully long-winded. What exactly do you mean by ‘ mystical washing away,’ ‘ spiritual regeneration,’ ‘ elect children,’ ‘ everlasting salvation,’ and being ‘ damned ’ ? ”

“ Don't you worry about that,” said the parson. “ The service is an old one. I am satisfied that you have got the main points right, and that is all that matters.”

“ But can't you cut them out ? And look here, do you steadfastly believe that Christ was born of the *Virgin* Mary, and that He *went down* into Hell, and *ascended* into Heaven, and that He will come to judge the *quick* and the dead ? And do you really believe in the resurrection of the *flesh*, because I am hanged if I do ? ”

“ The Church has always affirmed that the Christ was born of a virgin,” said the padre, “ though I don't really feel strongly about this point of doctrine. As for going down and ascending I think that essentially I mean the same as the writer of the creed, though I should put it differently. As for the second coming in the lifetime of the world, I believe in it as a possibility rather than as a certainty. I certainly believe in the survival of personality, which is the only important thing about the ‘ resurrection of the flesh.’ ”

“ That's all very well,” objected the Average Man,

“but here am I, at the most important moment of my life, when I am trying to make a clean start in a new sort of life altogether, and I have got to make a public and solemn confession of faith with all sorts of mental reservations. I don’t like it. Why can’t I say straight out what you and I really do believe ? ”

“You’ve got to obey the rules, that’s all,” said the padre. “And they aren’t up to date.”

“Well, I suppose I must equivocate a little to obtain so great a fellowship,” said the Average Man. “But I must say, I wish it wasn’t necessary.”

And as time went on he kept on running up against the same difficulty. The Church services, instead of being a help to him, continually worried him by their apparent irrelevance and insincerity. The preaching that he heard generally seemed off the point too. The choir worried him ; because it “rendered ” the service in a way which made it impossible for him to join in, and because he knew that it consisted of choirmen who were only interested in the musical aspect of the service, and of boys who weren’t interested at all. He felt that one ought not to have to pay men to praise God for one. But what worried him more than anything was that he had no friends among the congregation. He felt that this was absolutely wrong, and that as fellow members of Christ’s body they ought to be united. All men should know that they were His disciples by the fact that they loved one another. Yet most of them he simply could not love. He knew them as reputable men ; but they were men who kept themselves to themselves, priding themselves on their respectability in a manner which seemed almost

Pharisaical. One or two of them he knew were hard employers, who made a living by paying their men as little as possible, and working them as hard as possible. The communion of saints seemed to be lacking. The corporate embodiment of the Lord Jesus seemed to be in abeyance. Such keenness as did exist seemed to centre round certain committees and meetings, where little matters of procedure and ritual, which seemed to the Average Man of infinite unimportance, were debated with great heat.

And all the time he did need the fellowship of his brethren so badly. For he soon found that, however much he might like his comrades who were not Churchmen, there was now a gulf between them. The average joke was a joke that he simply could not laugh at and be loyal to his Master. The average amusement was such that he simply could not go to it. These jokes and amusements were not clean. They were poisonous. They degraded man and woman to the level of the beast, and he had determined to regard them as the children of God. So he found himself not disliked, not persecuted, but just left out, and that by his own will. It was hard. He was no longer the Average Man, and at times he almost wished he were. Being a Churchman did not make him feel self-righteous. He knew that God had called him to follow a higher ideal than the rest, and that he was to be judged henceforth by a higher standard ; and while he thanked God for that high calling, at times he felt terribly lonely and sore in need of help.

The Church had endued him with a new hunger ; but it failed to satisfy it.

CHAPTER V

THE GOSPEL AND THE CHURCH

THE fact is that the gospel for the individual is a simple matter to understand, while the Church is a very complicated affair. The layman in the last chapter had no difficulty in understanding the practical meaning of the profession that he had undertaken. It was simply that he had to try to look at everything from a new point of view, the point of view of Jesus Christ, a point of view from which the greatness of God filled the landscape, while the individual disappeared into insignificance except in so far as he stood out in the light of God's love. So things temporal suddenly became very unimportant, while things eternal loomed large. The effect of this point of view on the man who had assimilated it could be easily foretold. In proportion as the assimilation was complete he would approach more nearly to the ideal which is the ideal of every wholesome man, and which was the ideal taught and exemplified by Christ. For the individual, we repeat, the gospel is plain enough. It is simply the imitation of Christ, and there is no real doubt about the manner of man that Christ was.

But the Church is concerned with a host of other questions, which so occupy it that there is hardly any time left for the gospel. The Church is busy with literary and historical criticism, comparative religion and anthropology, cosmogony, embryology, psychology, metaphysics, apostolic succession, symbolic theology, mediævalism, modernism, ritualism, protestantism, preservation of continuity, adaptation to modern needs, relations with the State, finance, socialism, reunion, organised philanthropy, foreign missions, and countless other questions of apparently vital and pressing importance. Moreover, the Church is "all of a muddle." It can't see its way through. It is rent at every turn by violent antagonisms within the fold. On every question men are calling each other "obscurantists," "traitors," "heretics," "schismatics," "Laodiceans," "fanatics," and so on. It is very certain that in this, as in other ages of the history of the Church, outsiders would be puzzled to recognise the disciples of Christ by the love that they bear towards one another.

Something is wrong, and an ever-increasing number of men and women within the Church are feeling that all this strife and controversy is beside the point; that in it the gospel is lost sight of; that what we want to do is just to drop all these questions, and to get back to the main point, which is, after all, to embody Christ. We know that some people will go on wrangling, but why should every simple child that comes to school to learn how to be a child of God be dragged into the controversy? Why should every simple workman who comes to Church to worship God be involved

in these unprofitable complications ? There is no getting out of it, they are involved. Every child who is taught the Book of Genesis as part of his religious education is predestined to an eventual plunge into the murky waters of controversy. Every workman who comes to Church and sings the present psalter and listens to the present lectionary and repeats the present creeds is going to have his faith complicated by some of these unnecessary and unedifying wrangles.

What are we to do—we who only want to get the main issue plain ? We are confronted by three alternatives. The first is to initiate a campaign for the reformation of the Church and the revision of its methods and textbooks in the interests of simplicity and of the coming of the kingdom. That means that we plunge into the sea of controversy, and try to obtain the mastery. Could we but have a free hand we are sure that we could reform the Church ! Ah yes ; but so are all our brother zealots of the opposing camps. They are all in earnest. They are all sure that they are right. All that any of them wants is a free hand. I confess that in former days I have pinned my faith to such a campaign ; but lately I have begun to doubt whether any godly result can issue from this fratricidal strife. Moreover, we are, after all, only a section of the Church. Let us be humble enough to admit that if we had a free hand in revising the Church of to-day, a new generation would demand to revise our revision twenty years hence. I think that it is really almost necessary that the Church should be something of a compromise, and somewhat behind the times.

The second alternative is to cut ourselves off from

the Church, and its strife and corruption, and to start a new Church of our own, which shall be pure and holy indeed. Alack, my brethren, how many have done this very thing in the last hundred years, and with what result? Why, narrowness, poverty of life and pride, till they too have become corrupt and moribund. No, brethren, the life of Christ is in His body the Church, for all its infidelity. We cannot make Him a new body, other than that which He has chosen, for His Spirit will not dwell therein.

The third alternative seems to me to be the right one, and it is to take full advantage of the liberty that is allowed within the Church. I have in mind a little settlement in one of our great cities, where a few university men and many men of the place have grown into a brotherhood which is, as it seems to me, very real, very Christian, very pure in its ideals, very simple in its teaching and worship and manner of life, and which combines a very real unity with the English Church with a very real freedom from unnecessary complications. The premises of the settlement consist of a central house, where the secretary and a house-keeper live. The house contains a common-room, dining-room, chapel, and bath-room which are free to all members of the committee of the men's clubs, and the "officers" of the boys' clubs. Besides this house there are two men's clubs and four boys' clubs. The constitution is extremely democratic, and remarkably elastic in every way. Short prayers close each club every evening. On Sunday there is a simple and elastic service in each boys' club, and an equally simple service in Church for the men. Once a month

there is corporate Communion in the church, followed by a simple breakfast taken in common, and paid for by those who attend. Every Sunday evening there is a quite indescribable service in the chapel for the "officers" and communicants, which alternates according to circumstances between a Bible class, a prayer meeting, and a fellowship of silence, and is always a mixture of the three. By agreement with the rector of the parish the candidates for Confirmation are prepared under arrangements made by the "warden," who is always a layman, and seldom a professional theologian. Of course I am describing pre-war days. The result was, in my opinion, quite extraordinary. The brotherhood was continually faced with crises, such as the loss of its indispensable members; yet in the event no one was found to be indispensable. Members have been scattered broadcast over the world, yet I know of hardly one who has forgotten, or who, having once been a communicant, has since ceased to be one. When the war came it seemed as if the brotherhood would have to be for the time disbanded, yet it is, so far as the junior clubs are concerned, more flourishing than ever, though almost without *personnel* to manage it; while a monthly news and correspondence sheet shows that there is hardly a member who does not feel that absence has even strengthened the invisible bond that unites him to his brethren and his spiritual home.

This is just one example of the way in which in loyalty to the English Church a free society may grow up and flourish, and with the benediction of bishop and rector unite men in a simple faith such as is

almost impossible in the ordinary official parochial organisation. By means of such groups within the Church, ideals may be pursued and developed and justified without schism or disloyalty, without the danger of narrowness that comes from complete separation. By remaining within the fold they both nourish and are nourished by the Church, without losing any reasonable degree of freedom. Further, it is remarkable that in the particular instance described above the relations between the brotherhood and the official Church have steadily grown in cordiality. Suspicion, which was rife at first, has died.

It is, I am convinced, by using the freedom of the Church to pursue our ideals that we shall both avoid the pitfalls of separatism and commend our ideas to the Church. It is not by talking, but by being and doing that truth is made known, and purged of error. Had Jesus Christ been but a prophet there would have been no Christian Church to-day. It is because He was the Son, and because He lived and died perfectly, that He is our Lord and Master now. And so with His disciples, it is not by controversy or organisation, but by holy living and holy dying that they will purify His Church, and fill the world with the knowledge of God.

CHAPTER VI

METHODS AND WEAPONS

SUPPOSING that a new movement did spring up within the Church, and that men and women who felt that they were clear about the main issue did form groups within the Church where they could work for their ideals with loyalty and reasonable freedom, what should be their methods and weapons? To begin with, it is probably essential that the movement should *not* be organised or centralised. At the present juncture centralisation would mean controversy and loss of freedom. We want to keep out the people who have a passion for regulation and diplomacy. We want plain humble effort, with any amount of variety and experiment. We don't want notoriety or advertisement. We don't want to be labelled. We don't want to be dragged into the regions of criticism and controversy. We want to be the leaven that works unseen.

In the matter of worship and life and relations with the parish church, there must necessarily be infinite elasticity, to correspond with an infinite variety of

conditions. In the matter of teaching, if we confine ourselves to the practical issue there will be little temptation to divergence. The gospel in its practical bearings is plain enough. All that we do want is a literature. This literature must not be prepared or issued by authority. That would immediately arouse suspicions and drag us into the arena of controversy. In character the essentials are that it should be positive and simple. Too much time and energy have already been spent in attacking what is false. What is now needed is the promulgation of what is true. And the ultimate test of truth for the ordinary man is experiment. Anything that can be tested by experiment is vital. Anything that cannot be tested by experiment can be left on one side. Was Christ born of a virgin? We cannot test that by experiment, and therefore it is not vital to the ordinary man. Leave it to the Church. Is Christ alive? That is a matter that can be tested. It is vital. Assume Him to be alive, and see whether it works. Does He really live in us if we offer Him our bodies for His dwelling place? Try to see. This is vital. Is love really stronger than fear? Is it really true that humility and unselfishness are more important than wealth and power? Is it true that life is eternal? Assume these propositions true, and if in doing so you find a new happiness and peace yours, the balance of probability is in their favour. And if other men and women see that the fruits of your life are good, they will come and ask you to teach them too how to be happy and useful.

This is the new apologetic, which is as old as Christianity. Not controversy but demonstration, not

logic but power. In the long run it is the only apologetic that counts.

But in talking of literature, what of the Bible ? There again the same test must be applied. We want as much of the Bible as can help us practically. We don't want any of the stuffing, or of the parts that are going to land us in controversy. We want a shortened Bible for the use of plain people, and sooner or later someone will have to take this task in hand. Probably there will be many experiments in this direction. Parts of the Bible which are of infinite value to the educated man are quite useless to the workman or the child. But in the Bible is the kernel of the faith, and we have got to dig it out and make it easy of access to all who need it.

There is one other way in which in some places it might be possible for us to help the Church. There is little doubt that one of the chief difficulties of the Church lies in the traditional status of the clergy. The parson's job is such that it does not bring him into very close touch with the ordinary laymen of his parish. Very often they fail to understand each other. It has been suggested in a certain parish that one or two laymen who have long worked in the parish in a more or less independent fashion should cement the union between their work and that of the parish church by becoming deacons for Sunday duty, while still continuing to earn their livings during the week by their civilian occupations. Such men, it is thought, would be a valuable link between the clergy and the laity, and the experiment might be worth trying in some places.

Above all, we must not aim at finality. This movement of which we have spoken may develop, it may be maturing even now, it may never begin ; but if it does mature it must be content to be like leaven, working unseen, and ready and glad to be absorbed more and more into the life of the whole. Unlike a separatist movement, it must aim at rendering itself unnecessary, its ultimate object must be its own disappearance.

CHAPTER VII

REVELATION AND COMMON SENSE

THE word "faith" is made to cover a great deal of timidity and a great deal of laziness. Young people who ask questions about theology are told that they must refrain, and accept by an exercise of "faith" what they cannot hope to understand. That is one reason why young people who have had "a Christian education" so seldom know anything about Christianity. There are a great many doctrines which are not only highly agreeable to common sense, and easily understood, but are of absolutely vital practical importance, and yet hardly anyone attempts to understand them because they have always been taught to accept them in "faith" instead of asking questions about them.

To begin with, the question of whether there is a God or not, is one which Christian teachers are often very unwilling to discuss. They feel that intellectually the case for the existence of God is a weak one. They say that there is only one thing to do, and that is to make an effort of faith and believe it. Consequently

lots of people go away with the idea that it does not really matter very much whether they believe that God exists or not, as long as they try to "play the game." Yet really the question is one which should be absolutely of vital moment to every man. If there is a God he must look at life in one way, and if there is not he must look at it in another. His whole attitude towards life should vary according to the answer that he gives to this question. For if there is a God the evidence for His existence is found, not in antiquity, but in the present-day man. The real question is, "What is man?" If a man really has reason and will power and conscience—all the qualities which appear to distinguish him from the mere creature of impulse and instinct—then they must have come from somewhere. They must either be latent in nature, or they must have come from some Being outside of nature who possesses them. In other words, either nature must have a divine origin, or man must be the child, not only of nature his mother, but also of God His father. In either case God exists. But if man's reason and conscience and will-power are not real; if they have no effective existence; if they are, as has been said, no more than the by-products of a blind, insensate conscienceless process, bearing much the same relation to that process that the whirring sound of the wheels of a piece of machinery bears to the machinery, having as little significance, and as little practical effect, then there is probably no God. The fact is that if a man is determined to take his will and reason and conscience seriously, he is implicitly assenting to the proposition that God exists, while if

he decides to adopt a flippant, pessimistic, sceptical, invertebrate, jelly-fish sort of attitude towards life, he is implicitly denying the existence of God. Unless there is a God, goodness and generosity and nobility and heroism are mere names without any real meaning. They are dreams, vanity, nonsense. Few men will be willing to regard them as such, for to do so is to deprive life of all its interest and meaning. The theory of psychology which does not give a meaning to life as we have to live it is not likely to commend itself to us as likely to be true, however academically logical it may be.

Equally, the doctrine of the incarnation is agreeable to common sense. We human beings may be "spiritual," but it is quite impossible for us to understand or perceive the spiritual unless we can establish contact with it through the medium of our physical senses. Just as we see electricity revealed in its effects on matter, though the stuff itself eludes our senses, so we can only understand and perceive the divine Spirit in so far as He is revealed in His effects on physical beings. It is, we have argued, in man, the most highly developed of Nature's children, that we see the only clear and convincing evidence of the existence of the spiritual and of God. So too it is in man, and in the most perfect of men, that we shall see the fullest revelation of God, if we see Him at all. In fact, the most perfect man is necessarily the fullest revelation of God that we could possibly understand. By His freedom from all the fears and meannesses that degrade other men, by His peerless spiritual liberty, we acclaim the Christ as that most perfect Man, that fullest possible

revelation of God in the only terms that we mortals can understand.

So, again, the "mystical union" between Christ and His Church is not nearly so hard to understand as the difficult words make one think. If men are still to know God revealed in Christ, Christ must have a body through which to reveal Himself to men. We can only know other men through their self-expression in their bodies, and we can only know Christ through His self-expression in a body. But there is no man living who can show His wonderfully many-sided freedom and power to men. Yet each can show some part of Him. So, each showing a part, the Church corporate should show the whole, if the different members are really united in spirit.

Again, in the same way the mystery of Holy Communion becomes clear. We offer our bodies to Christ, that He may take them and show in each some part of Himself; and the bread and wine are the age-long pledge that what we offer He accepts. We pledge ourselves to be loyal to Him and to one another, and to combine to show the spirit of Christ to the world. So explained, the service of Holy Communion is clearly seen to contain the very epitome of our Christian faith and hope and duty. It is there at the altar that we perceive, most plainly and succinctly set forth, just what it means to try to be a Christian, and just where we are to look for help. Yet how many candidates for Confirmation fail to understand that Holy Communion is anything but a "Holy Mystery," incomprehensible and almost magical!

Priestly absolution, again, is very rational when it

is properly understood, and very comforting too. Yet there are many who honestly believe that we hold the almost blasphemous doctrine that without the pronouncement of absolution by the priest, God does not forgive ! What is the truth ? Why simply that Christ declared that as soon as a sinner repented and tried to amend God forgave him. Christ announced this as a fact, and because men trusted that Christ was the Son of God they believed Him, and took advantage of God's forgiveness. Christ still proclaims this fact through His new Body the Church, and the members of that Body whose function it is to make that declaration in His name are the priests.

Even the mystery of the Holy Trinity is not repugnant to reason nor wholly incomprehensible if it is explained historically. As a fact of history, the first Christians stated that they believed in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Why ? Because of their experience. Peter first learnt the love of the Father through knowing the Son ; but it was not till the Holy Spirit entered him and transformed him that the coward became infinitely brave, and the ambitious follower of the Messiah became the self-forgetful apostle of the gospel of salvation. Peter believed in one God ; but he had known Him through two revelations, the revelation in Jesus Christ, and the revelation in his own transformation of character. So nothing would satisfy Peter's disciples but a belief in one God and in the three Persons who were the revelation of that God. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity was the creation, not of a subtle, philosophic mind, but of plain men who had had a certain ex-

perience, and who refused to accept any explanation of that experience which did not fit in with and allow for the facts as they had known them.

Over and over again one finds that the Church in her teaching is lacking in simplicity, in the courage to try to understand her heritage, in the realisation that her doctrines that have been handed down from the earliest days are not mere arbitrary and mysterious revelations to be accepted with an irrational and uncomprehending assent, but doctrines pregnant with vital meaning for life, and destined to revolutionise the whole outlook and character of the man who tries to understand and believe and apply them.

It is very much the same with the Christian ethic. Only too often the practical words of Christ, which were meant to define for us our attitude towards our fellow men, are dismissed as a kind of idealism only meant for a better world; and this is often simply because the teachers of the Church have not the courage to apply common sense to their interpretation of these sayings. When Christ said, "Love your enemies," He meant it literally. He did not mean, "slobber over them." He did not mean, "condone their evil deeds." But He did mean, "wish them to be your friends." Christ loved the Pharisees as individuals, not for what they were, but for what they might be. He showed His love, not by shutting His eyes to their hypocrisy and pride, not by calling them "dear brothers," but by doing all He could to make them dissatisfied with themselves, so that they might become different, and so that they might become His

friends. So we should love the Germans, not by letting them do evil and shutting our eyes to it, not by being blind to their hideous cruelty and lust for power ; but by doing all we can to alter their attitude. Love must be wise. After the war we must be ready to be generous at the right moment ; but it were a very mistaken love to forget, even where one is ready to forgive. Even God does not forgive the impenitent sinner. To do so were to condone his crimes.

Again, consider that other vexed question, the question of the sexual union of men and women. How often Christ's words are regarded as a mere arbitrary commandment, and how seldom does anyone apply his common sense to interpret them. Yet Christ's point of view is easy to understand. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Sexual love among animals may well be a matter of physical instinct, for the resulting beings are beings which shall be guided by instinct. But the children of men and women are not children of nature, guided solely by physical instinct. They are, according to Christ, potential children of God. Therefore a man and woman must regard their marriage as a holy thing, for which they are responsible to God, since they are to bring into the world children for Him as well as for themselves.

The crying need at present is for the Church to realise the reasonableness and the simplicity of her gospel, and not to be afraid of explaining it to boys

and girls and men and women in a simple and practical way. We want fewer long words, less philosophy, less mystery, more simple statement of vital and practical truth.

Note.—The simple explanation of Christian doctrine and ethics is worked out in much greater detail in the writer's earlier book, "The Lord of All Good Life," Longmans, Green, 2s 6d.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH AND HUMAN RELATIONS

DOCTRINES, creeds, rites, ceremonies, constitution, discipline, all these are vain if the Church does not teach and show to the world the new life. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels . . . though I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I give all my goods to feed the poor and my body to be burned, and have not love, I am nothing." In the long run the most disastrous failure of the Church is the failure to love. It is that which does more than anything else to alienate the man of good will. When he finds in the Church the spirit of exclusiveness, the spirit that sets store by class distinctions, and class prejudices, the spirit of self-satisfied aloofness from the troubles of the unfortunate, then he condemns the Church, not for her Christianity, but for her lack of it. And he is entitled to do so. Did not the Master say, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another ? "

Let us be frank. In spite of the multitude of her alms, the wide-spread net of her "charity," the

Church is lacking in love. Church people are apt to thank God that they are not as other men. The man or woman who has poor garments is not made to feel that in the house of God, at any rate, he or she is welcomed as an honoured guest, which is undoubtedly how Jesus Christ would wish such to be welcomed. "I cannot go to church because I have no clothes," says the poor woman. "I have given up going to Communion till I can get a new suit. The people stared so," said an emigrant in an Australian mining town. "I didn't go to church because I was always put in the back seats, and didn't seem to be welcome," said a poor man who had shown wonderful faith during a long and painful illness. "Suitable accommodation is reserved for the poor of the parish," ran the legend in a large country church. "I wouldn't go to church if I had nasty smelly people next to me," said a lady church-goer. Such things should make us blush for very shame.

We have got to face this question of the Church and social distinctions. We have got to settle this question of human values. It is not going to be easy. It is not going to be a matter of gush. No amount of mere talk about "brotherhood" is going to slur over the existence and the recognition within the Church of a sort of pride that is about as definitely unchristian as anything well could be. Further, we are not going to solve this question by denying distinctions which obviously do exist, and by proclaiming an equality which obviously does not exist. Our brotherly love has got to be a practical thing which will take count of facts. ♡

It is perfectly true that some men are better educated, have better taste, finer instincts than others. It is perfectly true that some men are better fitted to teach or to govern or to direct than others. It is perfectly true that in the life of Church and nation there must be authority and discipline. It is useless to deny these very patent facts. It is also quite evident that it is not within the power of the Church to decide whether the privileges of education and responsibility are to be hereditary or not. The Church has to deal with the social structure that has been evolved by the nation, and to make the best of it. It is not the business of the Church to identify herself with definite political movements. Individual Churchmen may properly do so. The Church as such may not.

On the other hand, the Church is not being true to her Master unless she can show how the social structure can be permeated with real unity and real love. If it is not possible for master and man, employer and employed, landlord and tenant, officer and soldier, to be united in Christ's fellowship of love, then the Church cannot be true to her ideals, Christianity is unpractical and impracticable. We had better give it up. If, on the other hand, Christianity gives us a point of view from which it is possible to recognise both distinctions and the brotherhood of man, the Church must try to show an example of how this double recognition can be effected. St. Paul tries to show us how he thinks this can be done. We are all members of one Body—the Body of Christ ; but every member has not the same function. The foot is not the hand, nor the hand the eye. There are diversities of gifts ;

but there should be the same Spirit. Each member has his particular gifts and his particular functions. All are necessary. All are interdependent. To the full working of the Body the efficiency of every member is essential. No one member can suffer without all the others suffering. None are to be despised. All are to be honoured, for all are indispensable. Indeed, very often it is just the member which is least attractive, least "comely," whose efficiency is most important.

Here is the basis of sound democracy—sane mutual respect. We cannot all be managers, foremen, officers, masters. The master without the man is as useless as the man without the master. At the very start it is necessary that they must respect each other, and recognise that the other's function is a necessary and therefore an honourable one. We must get it out of our heads that manual labour, dirty labour, labour involving obedience to orders, are degrading. No labour is degrading. All honest, necessary, useful labour is honourable. The clean hands and tidy clothes of the clerk or the shop assistant do not constitute him a superior person to the navvy with his hard rough hands and his muddy breeches. Nor do the strong muscles and tanned skin of the navvy constitute him a superior person to the pale and puny clerk. In so far as each is doing necessary and useful work each should respect the other. They belong to different classes. It is inevitable that, as a rule, each should find his most congenial friends among those who follow his own manner of life. It is inevitable that each should have his own way of spending his leisure. It is inevitable that they should eat different

food, drink different liquids, and wear different clothes. But they should not despise one another. Above all, they should not forget that they are sons of one Father, servants of one Master, temples of one Spirit, members of one Body, and that each is necessary to the other in the building up of that Body.

All this is such platitude that it seems hardly worth writing down, and yet when one comes to think of it our national life is simply made up of individual pride and mutual contempt. Each little section of society sets store by the distinctions in appearance and manner and intonation and way of living that divide it off from others. Each little section fights for its own political interest, completely oblivious of the interests of those other sections whose well-being is none the less intimately bound up with its own. Each little section prides itself on keeping itself to itself on every possible opportunity and in every department of life. Men impose limitations on themselves, conventions and prejudices that narrow their sympathies, hamper their generous instincts, destroy their freedom ; and then they hug to themselves those limitations, glory in their self-forged chains. Jim and Jack may be friends at school. They may worship at the same church. They may be kindred spirits ; but if Jack works with his coat off and Jim with his on, if Jack has a large family and has to live in a poor neighbourhood while Jim has no family and lives in a suburb, they will no longer be seen together. In this matter women are even worse than men. A man while he is single may make what friends he likes, and keep what friends he likes. He may live

and give his affections in freedom. But let him marry and he is immediately pigeon-holed, labelled with a class, and henceforward he must not stray beyond that pigeon-hole.

Class distinctions as we honour them and as the Church recognises them are a form of slavery. They limit freedom. They check natural impulses and affections. They promote jealousy and pride and strife. Christ offers us liberty, and commands us to love.

The foundation of Christian liberty, in this matter as in every other, is simply the vision of God. Once realise how far God is removed from man, and realise how His Love has bridged that gulf, and then all the petty pride and jealousy of human distinctions vanish from sight. If when men and women knelt or (for fear of bagging the knees of their trousers) bowed their heads in church, they realised that they were approaching the Infinite and Eternal, they could not go on priding themselves on the petty distinctions of class, the soft white hands, the well-fitting clothes, the clean, starched collars, and well-brushed hair. Their sense of humour would set them free. But there is no real worship in our services. There is no sense of proportion in our prayers. God forgive us, we have no eyes, no ears, no understanding, no sense of humour, no faith. We need prophets to get up in our pulpits and mock at us. We want saints who by abandoning rank and wealth, and by living humble loving lives, will hold up to derision our false gods.

With the "man in the street" it is not words that count, but deeds. It has always been so. He needs the symbolism of action. It is not the words of Christ

but His Cross that makes men love Him. It is not the Sermon on the Mount, but the spitting and the scourging and the naked body exposed to mockery and insult that makes men take Him seriously. So with His Body the Church, it is not sermons which are going to win the souls of men, but the symbolising of faith in action. The chaplain who descends from the first or second class of a liner to address the steerage does not have one-quarter the hearing that he would have if he travelled steerage. The steerage passengers know that he is the representative of the great Teacher of humility, and they feel that he is not living the gospel that he preaches. The army chaplain who lives at brigade headquarters, and ministers to such battalions as are in reserve or at rest, does not get half the hearing that he would have if the men had seen him sharing their privations, their dangers, their boredom, in the front line trenches. To the man in the street the religion of Christ is before everything else a religion of love and humility. The preacher who shows him these will be listened to with respect, however faltering his tongue, however faulty his logic. It is the same with the Church as a whole. The man in the street does not believe in the Church because he does not believe in her sincerity, and he does not believe in her sincerity because he sees in her corporate life neither humility nor love, but only the repetition of the same class pride, party strife, prejudices, and divisions that he sees in society as a whole.

I have written elsewhere of the men who at this time of national danger have sunk their differences, swallowed their pride, overcome their prejudices, and

enlisted in the citizen army to fight with those whom formerly they despised and disliked, for a common ideal. In the army, men are learning what poor things their pride and prejudices were. They are learning the value of the virtues which are common to all classes, the fundamental virtues of courage and cheerfulness, and unselfishness, and honesty. They are learning to love and honour men with whom in civil life they would have had no dealings. When the war is over it must be the care of the Church to show these men how in the fellowship of Christ's Body they may still use their diversities of gifts, in the same spirit of mutual respect and loyalty, and for the furtherance of a common ideal of life.

CHAPTER IX

MISSIONS

THERE are few subjects about which the keen Churchman is more convinced and the average man more dubious than the necessity for and utility of foreign missions. The keen Churchman feels that it is one of the chief duties of the Church to spread the gospel until "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The average man questions whether the Church is fit to preach till she has set her own house in order, and points to travellers' tales of the failure of missions as a proof that his scepticism is justified.

For both these views there is a certain amount of justification. On the one hand, it is a law of nature and of God that that which does not fulfil its destiny shall die. If the Church is not missionary she will die. On the other hand, it is indisputable that the success of missions is not what one would expect. Missionaries do an enormous amount of good in the way of education and medical relief ; but the number of their converts, and the character of their converts, is disappointing, and so is their total effect on the life of the people

among whom they work. Something is wrong with missionary methods.

Personally I can only speak from the point of view of a traveller in missionary countries (*e.g.* Madagascar, British East Africa, Mauritius, Ceylon)—a traveller who has wished to think well of missions, and has been at some pains to understand their difficulties, and to estimate their degree of success. Perhaps it may not be out of place for me to say, as a proof of my good will towards missions, that some six years ago I did actually volunteer for missionary service in Central Africa but was rejected on medical grounds.

Generally speaking, the charge against missions is that they make few converts and have a pernicious effect on those whom they influence. It is an old story that the mission boy is the biggest rascal to be found, far more dishonest than the unregenerate savage. Of course, I am talking chiefly of Africa. I honestly do not think that it is enough to answer that charge by a denial. It has appeared to me that a great many natives attend the mission schools, and even simulate conversion, for purposes of their own. They want to become servants, or in some fashion to be the go-between to the white man and the native, which is often a profitable occupation. Unfortunately, it is often not a very honest one. A native head-boy will often cheat the other boys of part of their wages, and deduct a percentage for himself when paying his master's bills. Native guides are generally rogues, and often pimps. In order to enter any of these lucrative and rather dishonest professions, the first essential is to learn English, and the easiest

way to do that is often to attend the mission school. I have even known cases where natives have become priests in the English Church solely for mercenary reasons, and very unpleasant people they are. It would almost seem as though, in order to make real converts, it would be necessary to take precautions against its being worth while from the worldly point of view for natives to become converts.

A further very real difficulty of the present system is that as soon as a native becomes a Christian he ceases to be uncivilised, and becomes semi-civilised. He wears trousers and a jacket instead of a blanket and a coat of grease. A female wears petticoats and a blouse instead of the old short skirt which in European eyes is so immodest. It is hard to see how this can altogether be avoided, for undoubtedly in the case of unregenerate savages the introduction of Christianity is bound to revolutionise the whole social outlook. The Christian native can no longer buy a dozen wives, and amuse himself by hunting and fighting while his wives do the work. And I suppose that the modest attire of the white woman is only a symbol of the altered attitude of her menfolk towards her. Yet the effect often is to make the savage into a bad imitation of a white man, and to cause him to thank God that he is not as other men, which is a definitely unchristian frame of mind to be in. To say the truth, when the mission boy is not a rogue he is often something of a prig.

I fancy that if I were a savage I should regard the Christian life, not as a fuller, freer, nobler life than mine, but as a duller, more restricted kind of life, with

certain compensations in the form of self-esteem and comfort and opportunities for making money.

I confess that with regard to some missions that I have come across I have found myself wondering whether after all they were teaching Christianity, or a kind of adapted English respectability which was not really a religious thing at all. I have heard the same sort of criticism made even by missionaries themselves of missions in India.

Perhaps we are not sufficiently clear ourselves about the real content of Christianity. Perhaps we confuse it in our minds with elements which, though associated with Christianity in England, are not really a part of Christianity at all. Perhaps we adopt a wrong attitude towards our black brethren. Christianity, after all, is not a matter of clothes or of speech. It is possible to be a Christian and wear a blanket and be unable to speak a word even of pidgin-English. Brother black is probably a good deal less immodest than he looks, and possibly we are a good deal more prurient than he. Christianity will not change his colour or his climate or the shape of his skull, and so possibly we ought not to permit him to imitate us, but rather urge him to be his own best self, in a manner suited to the conditions of his existence. The two chief Christian virtues are, perhaps, humility and unselfishness, and I somehow fancy that these have been insufficiently insisted on in some missions.

I have not said anything about the wicked settlers or the district commissioners, whose unchristian example is so often alleged as a cause of the failure of missions, because I am quite sure that the less the

missionary has to do with them, and the less he identifies himself with them, the better he will succeed. Generally the official is a good friend to the native. Often the settler is not. Neither is apt to favour the missionary. Unfortunately, at first the native is apt to lump all white men together, rather to the missionaries' dismay. But they must play their own game as independently as possible, and trust to time to set matters right. Nevertheless, it is a great advantage if the missionary can be first in the field. In the Hova country in the centre of Madagascar the missionary arrived first. After he had made a good deal of headway, he was expelled from the country, and the native Church was exposed to a severe persecution. The result is that in the Hova country one finds the nearest approach that I know of to a native Church racy of the soil. Every village seems to have its place of Christian worship. Tananarive is full of churches of all denominations, and when I attended Holy Communion in the cathedral I found myself in the midst of a huge Hova congregation, listening to the service in the native tongue, and felt as I have never felt before or since the possibilities of foreign missions. I believe that in some measure the U.M.C.A. and the C.M.S. in Uganda have also profited by being first in the field, arriving in the country with no protection, and depending for their success almost wholly on the power of Christ crucified.

I have not mentioned Christian disunion as a source of failure, because I am convinced that the real cause of failure lies much deeper, and because I am also convinced that organised co-operation is only a very

small step towards success. There is only one way to win men to Christ, and that is to show to them something of His love, and humility, and quiet strength, and humorous common sense, His distrust of the efficacy of human aids to success, and His quiet confidence in the power of love and truth.

There are, dotted about the world, many poor missions, where men and women, often lacking in tact and breadth of mind and education, toil year after year to win the heathen by loving and humble service. They do not succeed. They are often despised alike by European travellers and by the natives themselves. Yet inasmuch as they are witnessing in their lives to the truth that love and humility and purity are stronger than money and organisation and wisdom, I am convinced that they are sowing a harvest which another will reap. No one is such a vulgar, snobbish materialist as the native when he first comes into contact with civilisation. Civilisation comes with arms full of glittering toys for which the native reaches out both hands, and for which he will submit to discipline, and sacrifice his most ancient customs and habits. As yet he has no eyes for spiritual riches, yet their turn will come, and it is for the Church to witness to them meanwhile in humility and love and patience and faith.

This may sound inconclusive ; but after all, is not our experience of home missions much the same ? It is easy enough to succeed in filling clubs, but much harder to fill churches. And the cause is often that the missionaries themselves have not a clear enough idea about where middle-class respectability ends and Christianity begins. Too often the boys and men

whom they convert show but one sign of their change of mind—a shame of their work and poverty and class, and the genesis of a social ambition. Too often the outward sign of conversion is a collar rather than unselfishness, and too often the collar is really the symbol of a new servitude rather than of a new liberty.

Perhaps this chapter is an impertinence. I have written it, not because I regard myself as an expert, but because I have tried to be a friendly critic. Six years ago at Oxford I joined a “Missionary Campaign,” and stumped the country uttering perfervid denunciations of the critics of missions. I could not do that quite in the same way now. As a Churchman I feel that the hour of self-criticism and repentance should not pass us by without some thought of the failure of missions.

PART II

THE CHURCH AND OUR ADVANCE
IN KNOWLEDGE

BY WILLIAM SCOTT PALMER

Author of "The Diary of a Modernist," "Pilgrim Man," &c.

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCH AND SCIENCE

WE have had from our beginning as a Christian Church a high calling in regard to truth, and there has been no time in our history when we have altogether forgotten it. But at this time we are awaking to a new sense of what that calling means. We are passing very swiftly from one stage of our responsibility to another ; our eyes are being opened upon a new world and a new interpretation of the old. And, as always happens when light penetrates into our darkness, we discover that we are capable of sinning against it through doing nothing worse than just what we did before. We have only to stay as we are and do as we have done, and we shall have to answer for a sin where once we knew no sin.

This is our position now in regard to the worship we should offer not only with all our heart but with all our mind. We are not, as a body or even in large numbers, worshipping with all our mind. We are not as a body, or many of us, earnestly striving after humility in mind. Many of us do not recognise the need of humility there, although we are perhaps ready enough,

too ready, to talk about the pride of intellect and the need to lay it down in submission to this or that, to the authority of the written word, to sanctifying association, to a consensus that may or may not rest on experience and so may or may not have valid claims upon us.

The time has come when we are forced to examine ourselves concerning all this, and to discover both our failure and our ignorance ; that we may also discover new light and the sin that it reveals. Our ignorance stands athwart the way of God. He is showing us by unmistakable signs that He would have us make straight His way. His sons are everywhere forsaking the Church to seek Him where He may be found without our hindering. In Italy, in France, in Austria, even in Spain, in America, North and South, and in our own country, dominions and colonies, the Church stands before men not as a city set on a hill to bear witness to the salvation men's hearts desire, to the eternal truth in which every truth of ours is fulfilled, to beauty and to love, to a supreme all-embracing faith and a sure and certain hope ; but as a fortress set about with walls behind which its craven defenders find their last refuge from a conquering world. And this Church of ours, as the world sees it, grows more negligible and more neglected the longer we thus stand on its defence.

No doubt there are many causes for all this, and many reasons why it should not surprise us ; but let us not forget to include among causes that failure in humility of mind, that *ὕβρις* of the intellect, which for many Christians has been consecrated by their very loyalty. There are beliefs which are the stronger and make the

greater demand on loyalty in that, unlike our religion, they are not rooted in experience, but are part of an inheritance which has for the individual man all the force of unquestioned instinct. Huxley, in his trenchant fashion, said that men dislike nothing more than having to revise their convictions. When those convictions have come to a man with the air he breathes, when they have been absorbed rather than won, when they stand, not on tested and established facts, but on general uncriticised tradition, they seem not reasoned convictions at all; they seem, rather, structural elements in his life and nature. They come to be defended, not as reasoned convictions are, or as facts of experience, but as life itself is—with violence and in loyalty. Then, because the mind concerning them is really not working, advancing, changing, but is at rest in an established status of belief, it ceases to worship God and His truth after its proper manner and with its appropriate humility. It takes on an insolence foreign to its true character, an insolence it never shows when piously at its work and going about God's business. The intellectual arrogance of religious men comes of their not worshipping and continuing to worship with all their mind.

Now God is stirring us through the operation of that providence by which in the long run weakness and evil are made known in failure. The Church is not able to win or keep men when they see light and acquire knowledge which it will not (or at least does not) recognise, or recognising rejects. Most fairly intelligent men come to know well enough what is valuable to them, what stands the test of their experience and

illuminates their experience, what meets their real necessity, when they are given opportunity to find it. And the world at large has made up its mind very firmly on certain questions with regard to which the Church either has not made it up at all, or has made it up in a contrary sense. These questions are not matters of religion ; they are matters of science, of our organised and systematised knowledge of nature, and of man and his history, possessions and operations. They are matters which touch on the Church's inheritance of tradition and on some of those beliefs which it holds the more firmly because they have no other root than in tradition. They are matters, some of them, with which the abstract intellectualism of the Church, and its ancient and excessive, because unbalanced, confidence in deductive reasoning are bound up. Yet, we must say it emphatically, they do not immediately but only by association concern its religion. That remains ever valuable, ever guaranteed by experience, ever responsive to the needs of men, ever sought after ; and by multitudes no longer found within the Church because there it is not clearly and practically distinguished, even by teachers, from the Church's science and philosophy and false intellectualism. So the stroke of the sword of God, in a providence which precludes success at the price of truth, falls heavily on the innocent. The guilty—the *aveugles volontaires*—and the innocent are of one blood and life and working in life, one responsibility, one destiny.

Let us open our eyes. Let us also examine the process and progress of mind elsewhere than in our Church, for here it is difficult to see clear. There is much to

be learnt elsewhere, among men whose minds have more disinterestedly and consistently worshipped truth. The history of science abounds in instruction and edification for us. When certain astronomers, Galileo's contemporaries, would not hear his tale of a revolving earth, and refused to look through his telescope at Jupiter's moons because there were, of rational and authoritative necessity, only seven planets and therefore Jupiter could not have moons, they were doubtless loyal to their belief, and their belief doubtless seemed to them worthy of their loyalty. The geocentric astronomy was established by Aristotelian reasoning and confirmed by Holy Writ and an infallible judgment of the Church. To give moons to Jupiter and set the earth rolling was to accuse God of imperfection and Aristotle, Scripture and the Church of mistake. Rather accuse this man and others like him of impiety—that was the only course open to loyal and pious men. This course was followed, both by the Church and by not a few men of science. Later, nearer to our own day, when Darwin published the facts he had collected, and offered his biological telescope to his colleagues, there were still men of science who refused to look through it, and on similar grounds. The doctrine of special creation was established. It was confirmed by Scripture and the Church. *Tant pis pour les faits*, or rather there were no such facts, and if there were they must be explained away. We all know what happened.

A very few years ago science was faced by another grave difficulty in the discovery of radium and the facts of radio-activity. But there was no opposition, no embarrassment, no plea of established theory

(there could be no plea of sacred association or sacred authority). The atomic theory, every theory or hypothesis or conclusion that needed to be revised, was revised. There was humility of mind, no intolerance, no arrogance, no *ὑβρις*. The faith of science had evidently gained in purity and strength and brought in courage. It was become and now is a faith rooted, not in system or external authorities, but in experience enlarging through experiment and by the discovery of new facts and things. The authority of science and of its hypotheses is that of a collected, collated and organised experience. It changes where that changes ; it is itself submissive to truth ; and therefore it comes before men with the power of truth. It is respected, appealed to, valued, used. We have now come to a point in the life-history of mankind when without it we should seem to ourselves lost children in an almost pathless wilderness of things. But we never are without it. Science is indeed a city set on a hill ; its streets are thronged ; it has made ways for us through the whole world ; and its wealth is given and spread abroad among men. It is cosmopolitan, catholic ; its mind is altering all our minds, whether we know of it or do not. And it has no need of either walls or of defenders ; no wise man is consciously and avowedly its enemy any more than he is consciously and avowedly the enemy of himself.

Yet this high success has come about within narrow boundaries, both of human power and human need. Science cannot satisfy man ; and it has done its work unaided by art, unaided by religion—both of which man needs as he needs bread and God. For long it was

badly hindered by an ecclesiastical dogmatism based on uncriticised tradition and wielded by a tyrannous yet benevolent authority. It was hindered by a close alliance, or rather a confusion, with magic ; it was even hindered by a dogmatising of its own, due to the magnitude and rapidity of its triumphs. It has overcome all these difficulties and drawbacks because, although with no better than "single vision and Newton's sleep," it has steadily sought truth and ensued it, in an unquenchable mental fire of hope and love and faith.

Much greater than the opportunity and capability of science are the opportunity and capability of the Church ; from which nothing human or divine should be alien, which sets itself no bounds of a merely temporal experience, but has through its prophets, its mystics, its saints, a vision and an experience of eternal life. Assuredly it has a mission, then, in regard to science, a mission of fulfilment by the depth and height and width of its own knowledge. Science is incapable of interpreting itself and its relation to the fullness of the life of man ; just as it is incapable of ministering to all, or to any of the profounder of, his needs. It will never be, it cannot be, interpreted, except in being taken up into the higher knowledge of religion by a great effort of synthesis, which shall embrace all modes of human activity and all manners and results of the revelation of God and the uplifting and empowering of man. The mission of the Church in regard to science demands this effort of synthesis, in which the revelation given to scientific men, won by their earnest and single-minded worship, shall find its meaning

and its completion in the revelation given to religious men, for whom truth and beauty and holiness and power and love are all seen as one—and are known in their own lives as God becoming incarnate in themselves.

How far has that mission been recognised ? And, whether recognised or not, in what manner has it been carried on ? These are searching questions, not to be answered without much probing of ourselves as we are now and of our history, scientific and religious.

The ancestral tree of science, like the tree of mankind, goes back to a time when much besides itself, as we know it now, was conjoined with it. Biologists tell us that the common stem of mankind, some million years ago or more, gave origin to the monkeys of the old world and the new, to the gibbon and the siamang, and later to the orang, the gorilla and the chimpanzee. These split off at different periods, leaving the true human stem to divide later still into races such as that of Neandertal (which came, mercifully for us, to an end) and those that have continued to the present day as *Homo sapiens*—true man—in his many varieties. The common stem of the sciences embraced poetry, myth, magic, crude guesses at scientific truth, uncritical interpretations of experience, and undisciplined and inchoate philosophies. Only within the times we call modern has science come to its proper rights of existence, method and application, in its proper varieties.

The Christian Church, too, has a history ; but it is not the same. Rather it is the history of a man—if you like, of a Grand Man of Swedenborg—only to be complete in a life to come. It was a child once,

coming into a prepared social inheritance. Part of this inheritance embodied traditions from the early confused days of science struggling to light in Eastern civilisations. The Child-Church inherited a pictorial cosmogony, such as those days provided. This was enshrined in the Hebrew Scriptures and had there been sanctified. The halo of religion had been conferred on it, and without criticism or question it was taken up into Christian theology. The Church then effected a synthesis between a current cosmogony and its own religion. It effected it through the medium of theology.

Religion and theology are obviously not the same thing, any more than are life and biology. There are religious men who denounce theology and will have none of it, would have the Church have none of it. They are wrong; they are also unpractical; they certainly have a theology of their own as (probably all unknowing) they have a philosophy. Most likely both are not nearly as good as they might and should be. We cannot live as the lilies of the field; we have to live as beings who more or less faithfully consider those lilies. We are called to a rational consideration of experience as well as to living our complex life and having experience. We are indeed not religious men unless we are also reasonable beings, using to more or less good purpose the reflective powers God has not given us for naught. Therefore there is and must be a theology with which our religion is closely bound. But because religion is essentially an affair of the sublime and supreme art of living to the utmost, and theology is of the business and science and philosophy

of reflective thinking, we must distinguish between the two—always, steadily, distinguish and teach other people to do the same.

Christian theology, in its early days, made a great and fundamental mistake. It took over its traditional inheritance of imperfect and impure science *en bloc*, as not only consecrated but for ever fixed. It did not allow for growth, for advance, in revelation, in the use of reason and in experience. We must not blame our fathers. The sense of change and movement in the world and in man was for them but feeble. The historic sense, as we know it now, was not born. So theologians set up an intellectual idol which they worshipped, adopting a scheme of creation and of man which they wrought into the substance of theology and so into the methods and expressions of religion. From this idol and this scheme we are now suffering severely. The worship of the mind by which men touch God's truth and learn how to attain it has been diverted from Him. The Church has been hindered from interpreting and fulfilling later and better science in a living synthesis. And the dreadful isolation of the great and triumphant city of science from our religion and our religious life, which we now acknowledge and suffer from, is only one of the results.

There must be no more such idols. We must not set up any new outcome of science in the same way ; we must not make any new synthesis of it in theology without also making due allowance for the plain fact that every work of man partakes of the nature of life, and should grow with his growth and be changed in his own change. But neither must we allow any

such work of his in any stage of its growth, any substantial change and gain in knowledge, to be neglected in the Church. We must be very humble before our advancing science, very humble before our changing philosophy, very humble before the revelation of art ; but above all, we must be humble before life and the never-ceasing effort of God to communicate Himself through every one of the enlarging avenues of life.

This is our preparation. But what have we and ought we to do when we are ready, that we may play our due part in repairing the harm the Church has done to its members and the world by its intellectual idolatry ? How are we to take up our share of the burden and high privilege of its mission to science and the world of reflective men ? If we look at the Church of Rome we see a theological system in which part is so interlocked with part that to pull out one is to pull the whole machine to pieces. The Roman Catholic Modernist movement was outwardly brought to a standstill by the strength and dutifulness of a government well aware of this fact, pledged to maintain the machine, and themselves really integrated with it. There is no hope of corporate action in that quarter, although there is much hope in the changing minds and opening eyes of individual members of the Church, both lay and clerical. The time will surely come when the Roman government and the Roman system of theology will both be broken, to let in life and living truth. Individual effort is doing much and will do more. Adversity is doing much. And, maybe, when the prophetic motto of the Pope—*Religio depopulata*—comes plainly, generally, true, the work

of restoration will begin, the work which really is *restaurare omnia in Christo*.

But now, while we await these great events, what are we of the Church of England to do ? We have many advantages. We have no such perilous completeness of theological system to contend with, no such government. Yet neither have we any reasonable hope, at present, of sufficient corporate action. We must each do what we can, layman or clergyman. There are many claims on our fidelity, diligence, close attention, and on our disinterested recognition of values not yet embraced within the Church ; there are many problems and difficulties created for us by the divorce between the dead and traditional pseudo-science of the Church and the living science of to-day ; and by the way in which the Church's science has affected its theology, its religion, its worship. We must be bold, bold with ourselves, bold with other people. And we must try to make clear to ourselves and to them how this state of things has come to be. We must go to the bottom of the business. We must have done once for all with temporising, and with a false and superficial reconciliation which slurs over real oppositions. We must pull down that idol, the established and consecrated traditional science, not try to pretend that it can be accommodated to the worship of the living God. There is a real "*either—or*" before us. We must choose between these two.

Then, when we have chosen right, we must face the consequences and set about our synthetic work. Mind—it must be truly and warmly synthetic. We must

take up into our Church life the life of science, as we take up (or should take up) the life of art, of philosophy, and of the social polity in its pertinence for the Sons of God. Then, no doubt we shall be faced with all the questions which modern science has taught the modern man to ask, all the scientific difficulties that keep him from the Church, and leave him to be religious, as he can, outside. We shall need to bring together the Neandertal man and the child at the Christian font. We shall be faced by the whole trouble of miracles and the question of the validity and weight of evidence for them. The critics of the New Testament will have their say with us, a very telling, often a wounding, say. The youngest of the sciences, psychology, will search out the weaknesses of its precursor, on which the Council of Chalcedon leaned its weight. We shall have to find out what we really mean by the incarnation of God and the freedom of man, by revelation, inspiration and authority; by the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come; by atonement, by providence, by prayer. We shall have to discover the meaning of omnipotence in the God who gives Himself to every creature according to the measure of its ability to receive. We shall have to trace through the mazes of our theology the consequences of a doctrine of original sin and transmitted guilt which we inherited, not from knowledge of our true forefathers who sprang from the human and pithecoïd stem, but from the mere tradition of an imaginary Adam endowed with righteousness no such ancestor of ours ever possessed, and falling as none ever fell.

Indeed, we shall have our lesson, a hard, long lesson. But when we have learnt it we shall be able to take courage, and to stand before men as citizens of a divine city, in whom is no fear of any man, let him bring with him what questioning he may and will. When the whole Church has learnt that lesson with us, its walls of defence will be levelled to the ground and its defenders will find themselves set free to carry their divine mission throughout the world. *Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH AND ITS AUTOMATISM

“AUTOMATISM dogs our steps: the formula crystallises the living thought that gave it birth, the idea is oppressed by the word, the spirit overwhelmed by the letter. Behind all this lies the ineradicable difference between life, which is movement itself, and its manifestations, which it for ever leaves behind.”¹

Automatism has not only dogged the steps of Christians in the journey of the Church: it has crushed down, subdued, their Christian life. It has constrained the very spirit of the Church as well as forced its mind into a mould.

We ought not to be surprised; all men and bodies of men have been in the same case. But we may well be ashamed if we refuse to shake off this thralldom, now that we know what it is and how it has come about. Yet—so widespread and constant is the tendency of man to enslave himself to the creatures of his mind, which can no longer express for him the

¹ “Henri Bergson: An Account of his Life and Philosophy.”
Ruhe and Paul, p. 212. (Macmillan.)

meaning he once had given them—we might not unreasonably despair of being set free, but for the great, solemn, wonderful fact that the Holy Spirit of God, the Lord and Giver of Life, cares for us in His own way, not in ours. That wind, blowing where it listeth, has found in certain minds outside the Church the openness, the readiness to learn, and the whole-hearted devotion to truth, that we have lacked. And there we have our lesson. There we see men shaking off automatism and giving to the creatures of their mind a new ability to grow with the growth of mind. We are not doomed to this slavery. We may so learn our lesson as never more to be overcome by the enemy whom once, very naturally but in ignorance, we treated as an ally. We may learn to discover new depth of meaning in that charter of freedom—The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath ; and in the ever-pregnant words—Ye have heard that it hath been said . . . *But I say unto you.* And if we need enthusiasm to stir us to our learning we may find it by studying the picture of our great Church, the very Body of Christ and home of the Spirit of Christ, as it stands before the world almost meaningless for it, hardly sharing the interests of men in art or philosophy or science or civilisation, to any purpose they can recognise and feel. And this, all this, although in the Church are living treasures without which all men's lives go poor.

Those treasures of the Church are indeed “spirit and life.” They are religion and religious fellowship with its prophetic, its reflective, its symbolic and sacramental expressions—expressions or manifestations which never die, never crystallise, never grow old.

They are treasures guaranteed in corporate experience, and they are spiritual, moral, intellectual ; they are cherished in the Church's love and faith ; they are always ready for the test of experience in any man. But men cannot reach them, do not know they are there, because they are guarded closely lest harm that cannot hurt them should come to them.

There are formulas of the Church which have become hard, stiff, unmeaning, for men who yet are craving for what was once expressed by them. The life these formulas still have is for the most part that given to them by men who have a real feeling of brotherhood and can carry their own life into sympathetic union with that of bygone men in bygone circumstances, an ability we call the historic sense. Such men reconstruct the past and re-inspire it. They can feel with the Ptolemaic astronomer and see with his bygone eyes the value of that system which served him well and serves no man now. They reconstruct, they interpret, they explain. But men who cannot do this, men less skilled, less open-minded and patient, must do something different. They may turn their backs on the Church ; they may despise it sufficiently to conform to some of its ways without attaching any importance to them. They may find religious fellowship elsewhere, or do without it except as it comes to them unsought. They may become reactionary, and in the intellectual prison of the past crystallise their own minds, yet find there (maybe, and thank God for it) spiritual, mystical life, social life, devoted and enthusiastic life ; although that life is out of touch with the great body of their fellow-men and with vital currents

that run throughout the world. We have examples of all these methods of dealing with the Church's difficulties. The great mass of the people is what we call "indifferent"—that is to say, entirely unaware that the Church has anything to give which can be any good to it, although it is often aware of wants that are many and crying, even of wants we others know to be religious although it would probably call them by other names. The mass is hungry, unsatisfied with its food of husks. But it is and remains "indifferent" towards the Church. It is not unlikely to become before long unaware "whether there be" any Church. Beyond the indifferent mass are our examples—thoughtful men and women, and short-thinking, small-minded men and women; all of whom alike have either thrown away the Church's treasure with its intellect's dead product, or have accepted the treasure and sacrificed their own minds to the idol made of that product. They accept legends, traditional pseudo-science, literalism, commercialism, legalism or magic. They have done this at the bidding, so they believe, of a Church whose infallibility is guaranteed, and whose *magisterium* covers any ground infallibility cannot reach. By some twist of judgment we have such men and women in the English Church, where the only infallibility that has a shadow of legitimacy, and is practically accessible in any degree, is an affair of a period set apart from the continued history of the Church, and of a status of the Church that itself destroyed.

Let us very heartily thank God that there are among us Churchmen who have learnt to distinguish effectively

spirit from letter, living thought from its products, the uttered word from the vital idea ; and have become able to value each after its measure and according to its place in the experience which life rolls up, and by which values are conserved. These men know that they are not abandoning themselves to any purposeless and unmeaning flux of things or of mind ; they know well that to pass on with the great current is not to destroy but to fulfil that which appears to be left behind. They are of the faithful, conserving, yet open Catholic mind. They know that life is very movement ; but that it is also an unfathomable reality the nature of which is very *memory*. They know that the memory of life, in a man or in a Church, is a constructive and abiding fulfilment for all it may embrace. There would be in the Church far more such men and women if the Christian religion, as it is made known among us, were both more Catholic and more Evangelical ; that is, if it were more truly and fully incarnational, and more faithful to the inspiration of the Spirit that fills the whole world and leaves God at no time and in no place without His human witness.

Herein lies the reproach of the Church. From the beginning of time men have made intellectual idols, schemes and systems ; but the Church should have known better than to worship them with the blind and dangerous tenacity it has shown, a tenacity going far beyond that of men elsewhere. It should have known better, just because its treasures were avowedly spirit and life ; because it believed in and experienced the advancing incarnation of God and the continued

communication of His life and light and truth to men. It was pledged to the movement of life and the indwelling of the Spirit that moves in life. Its Lord wrote down no commands, gave no code of laws, propounded no system or scheme, taught no science, never theologised. He gave into its charge living principles. He initiated revolutionary changes in thought which were to be both the fulfilment of the thought that they displaced and motives for further change. His words, He said, were spirit and life ; they were not letters of a law. And although He came not to destroy He assuredly came to fulfil, not to keep unchanged.

The Church has in this great matter fallen from its high estate and calling. It has been false to its Lord, false to His principles, false to the pattern of His life. It has striven against the Spirit of God, and set barriers against His indwelling of men. For this it must repent. It must change its mind and seek to have and to display the mind of Christ. It must acknowledge an apostasy from that divine mind which is its glorious treasure and has been the mind of all its prophets, not least of those to whom it would not listen and will not listen now.

Of all bodies of men in the world, this, the social embodiment of the eternal Christ, should be the most true to life, to its movement and change. Yet it seems to have, perhaps it has, less trust than others in the Holy Spirit of life. It is afraid ; it is self-guarding ; it is lethargic, dull, half-asleep, self-comforting. The prophets speak : it does not hear, or if it hears it silences their voice. The people leave its

city, stream through its gates. No streams come the other way to replace them.

It must repent, change its mind, awake ; it must once more put on its beautiful garments. It is not beautiful now in the eyes of men, and so far as it is faithless and unrepentant it cannot be beautiful in the eyes of God.

PART III

STUMBLINGBLOCKS

BY HAROLD ANSON

Rector of Birch-in-Rusholme, Manchester ; Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Lincoln ; late Warden of St. John's College, Auckland, N.Z. ; late co-Editor of "The Commonwealth" ; contributor to "Concerning Prayer."

CHAPTER XII

“THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?”

Two parsons were talking earnestly together close beside me. They were discussing an excellent layman, whom they both admired for his great qualities and his blameless life. “But is he a Christian?” said the first. “Well,” replied my other neighbour, “it all depends upon what you mean by a Christian.” “I mean,” said the first speaker, with a slight touch of indignation in his tone, “*does he believe in the divinity of Christ?*” It turned out apparently that the admirable layman had expressly said that he did not, but that he believed Jesus Christ to have been the most perfect man who had ever lived. So it was agreed that he could not be a Christian. And this is not an uncommon attitude of mind among the best of our laity.

There are very many laymen, outside those strictly ecclesiastical circles where the laity are much more rigidly orthodox than the clergy, who find themselves quite unable to believe in the divinity of Christ, so far as they are able to understand the meaning of

the doctrine at all. If you question them, and if they are willing and able to give an answer, it will emerge that they have a very strong and definite feeling that our Lord was a man like themselves, "only very much better." They stick fast to this belief, and it seems to them to be of vast importance. They feel that, if they admit that He is God, they deprive Him of reality and make Him inhuman. It appears to them that the parsons want to rob them of the real, genuine, brotherly, flesh and blood man, whom they can understand, and who understands them, and to substitute for Him a sort of demigod, who is neither exactly God nor wholly man, whose psychology is quite incomprehensible, who acts, now as God, now as man, who cannot really be any example to us, because He can always summon to His aid resources which lie outside our scope, and who bears no sort of real relation to mankind as we know it to-day. For such a being they have no use. It is true that the clergy urge that our Lord condescended to patronise us, so far as to simulate, or even genuinely to experience, an interest and share in the ordinary trials of life, but it seems to the ordinary man to have been nothing more than the amiable adventures of the slumming ladies who make excursions among a class to which they do not belong, and whose point of view must always be wholly alien and unreal to the class which they set out to reform. Their feeling about such a Christ as the Church appears to propound is exactly that of the Labour Party towards the proposals of their middle class sympathisers: it is very kind of them to be interested, but they prefer to work out

their own problems with the help of leaders who belong to their own class.

Now doubtless the layman, if this be his view, is wholly wrong about the official theology of the Church. The whole Monophysite controversy, and the decisions of Chalcedon which issued therefrom, were intended to safeguard this very truth—that the humanity of Christ was a true and genuine one, and that our Lord was not (if the expression be not irreverent) a monstrous hybrid, bred from two discordant elements, God and Man, having not only the ugly and inharmonious characteristics of the hybrid, but also the inability to reproduce these monstrous conditions in the race. The Church teaches that He was the natural, appropriate, and inevitable outcome of man's fore-ordained evolution, which is to express God, and of God's natural and eternal and inevitable destiny to manifest Himself as Man. Christ was "*totus in nostris*" as well as "*totus in suis*"—a very true and real man, as well as very true and real God.

This is very sound and orthodox theology, and our layman is wholly and entirely right in insisting that he will receive no Christ, and has no use for a Christ, who is not "*totus in nostris*," wholly and genuinely one with us. In the official teaching of the Church, his case has been fully met if only he knew it, so far as the assertion of a true and full humanity in our Lord is concerned.

It may, however, very well be doubted whether the popular teaching of the Church, by which I mean the teaching given in the pulpit and the Sunday School, and the much more powerful teaching given by our

stained-glass windows, picture-books and statues, has ever interpreted or proclaimed the official theology of the Church. The tendency of popular theology, in spite of all that happened at Chalcedon, has been to minimise so far as possible, from motives of mistaken reverence, all that made our Lord a genuine brother to mankind. His manhood has been restricted to those limitations and defects which are the inevitable humiliations of our present state, and even in regard to these, the admission that He genuinely suffered them is only grudgingly and timorously made. He was man, they might admit, inasmuch as He was hungry, thirsty, ignorant, needing sympathy, doubtful about the future, immature, subject to pain and death, and so on. But all that is noble and transcendent in Him is ascribed to an alien source, and is said to belong to His Godhead, in which, it is implied, we have no share, being "mere men." So it is as God, we are told, that He forgives sins, walks on the water, heals disease, admits men into the Kingdom, rises from the dead, and ascends into Heaven. There is an idea prevalent that by some necessary and inevitable process (usually connected with the Miraculous Birth) the son of Mary was, magically as it were, and in a moment, lifted out of all those limitations which we associate with humanity, except in so far as He chose to assume voluntarily certain humiliating experiences, just as the wealthy West-ender assumes a temporary and dramatic poverty in unclean surroundings prior to returning to a life of comfort and ease. The truth that the process which we call the Incarnation, by which God manifested Himself in Mankind, was a continuous process, whereby

Jesus Christ, through continuous acts of faith and realisation and prayer (carried out, as we carry out such processes, with effort and "strong crying"), grew in wisdom as well as in stature, and in favour with God as well as with man, and that He realised and "made good" His divine nature through a real, genuine human life of faith and sonship, involving effort, this is generally hidden in the ordinary teaching of the Church. In place of this, an unnatural demigod, who is neither God nor man, is put up for the worship of mankind—and naturally and wisely such a saviour is rejected. "The truth that God is incarnate in a humanity which itself in Him dies to sin and lives to God, which is the truth of the New Testament, is not yet that of the Church."¹ The Church was not yet ready for a theology which would proclaim that God and man were not antithetical, but complementary, terms, so that one who should be wholly Man would be *ipso facto* a complete expression of the element of Sonship in God. Popular religion clung to the position that man was something, if not obscene, at least profoundly unsatisfactory, in his essential nature, and not merely by a process of degradation, and that just in so far as God in His self-manifestation came to partake of human nature He was thereby necessarily degraded and polluted. He would have been more god-like if He could have avoided the necessity of partaking of human nature. Moreover, the human nature of which He partook did not include (so it was taught) all that is most characteristic of humanity, a rational nature, a free will seeking for its own realisa-

¹ Du Bose, "The Œcumenical Councils," p. 283. (T. and T. Clark.)

tion, passions clamouring for fulfilment, but by a single supernatural process within the womb of the Virgin, God assumed the form of man, so far as flesh and blood, and so far as the purely physical limitations of human nature are concerned, but retained a Divine mind and a will which needed no continuous effort to maintain communion with God, and which sailed triumphantly through life, suffering merely the purely physical ills due to His alien human body, but unassailed by the terrific spiritual agonies of human nature in the achievement of its own self-fulfilment. This teaching, though it has no claim to orthodoxy, is popular among the devout, in so far as it appears to lift the life of our Lord up to a higher level, in so far as it rescues it from that "increase in favour with God and man" which appears to many devout persons to detract from his unique claims. The Christ of the church window, with white face, and flaxen beard, and long, curled hair, and bloodless lips, and half-shut eyes, and limp and flabby hands, is not an untrue representation of a being who was supposed to manifest divinity by his conspicuous deficiency in humanity ; and the neurasthenic St. John, unable to stand upright or to look straight before him, was also not a bad portrait of the influence which such a Christ might have been expected to produce in His followers. Thus popular religion strove to honour God by proclaiming Him as manifested in a passionless and emasculated humanity.

In so far as this was the representation of the Divine Christ which has been taught to the laity, we cannot but thank God that they have in so many cases

continued to say, "We do not believe in the Divinity of Christ." Is there then any way in which we might proceed to make the ordinary educated man understand in modern language what the Church meant by declaring that Jesus was Divine ?

If we are ever to do so, we must begin by trying to make people see what we understand by "Divine," what, in fact, we believe to be the nature of God, for indeed there are many people to-day who think it nobler to be human than to be like the God of the Churches. As things now are, a large number of persons, who are religiously and devoutly brought up, believe themselves bound to worship a God whose character is very much worse than that of many good people whom they know. They think of God as being a Person of stupendous power, who could, and possibly will, ultimately destroy you with a mere look or thought, for some sin which you have well nigh forgotten. He is also the one person in the world who is always disappointed with you, who always thinks you might have done better than you have ; the one person who expects a daily confession of failure ; the one person who always says when you fall into trouble, "Now then, what did I tell you ? I gave you full warning." He is the one person who possibly might inflict disease upon you for life, and upon your descendants after you, for a single act of indiscretion, a thing which no man of your acquaintance would do, however depraved and cruel he might be. He is the one person who is supposed capable of showing his love by killing your wife or child if you love them too much. (He does it, you are told, as a way of making

you love Him more than them—a procedure as mean, so it seems to the modern mind, as it must be singularly ineffective.) This is perhaps a bald and unsympathetic account of the creed of many who do, nevertheless, believe in a God of love, and are full of the fruits of love in their own lives, but it is not a very exceptional or rare form of belief. God is associated in thought, to many people of artistic perception, with a preference for sentimental poetry, luscious music, futile pictures ; with a preference for the clerical profession over all others, a love for black clothing, black book covers, cheap print, crude and hideous symbolism, ill-ventilated and pretentious buildings, and inordinately dull public speaking. Until we can clear away this horrible caricature of God from people's minds, there is little good in asking the ordinary man to believe that Jesus Christ is God. His answer will be, "I am thankful that I know better. I know He is true Man."

We must, indeed, as St. John tells us, begin with man whom we have seen, if we are to form a picture of God whom we have not seen. The only idea we can form of a God whom we should desire to worship, is one who should exhibit, while He transcended, the characteristics of the best men and women whom we know. Mankind, which, at its worst, is so unutterably devilish, is, at its best, the most perfect and worshipful thing we know. If there be a God anywhere, who should be able to claim our allegiance, He must be a Person who should manifest the love and courage, the strength and beauty, the patience and self-sacrifice, the justice and wisdom, which we find scattered about in little patches here and there among the men and

women whom we know. Even if we are told that a being of such a kind would be persecuted and destroyed by the more brutish forces of the world, even so, even if He were to perish, yet we would desire to worship Him for a moment before He perished utterly out of our sight. We have seen just glimpses of such a divine power in the lives of one or another whom we have known, and we have felt impelled to fall down and worship. If there be any good in ourselves (and we are sure that there is, just because we understand what goodness is), it is in virtue of sharing in some measure in this godlike character. Yes, even if all this should be destined to perish, and to go down quick into the pit, yet we would worship it, and not the brutal, jealous, cruel forces of the world, which, however powerful they may be, we would desire to defy and scorn, before we were ground under their heels. We have then, and all men of good will have, a vision of what the divine expression must be. It must include all that is best in humanity, and nothing which in human character would be recognised to be cruel and inhuman. But when we speak of humanity as being the inevitable expression of the Divine, we do not mean humanity as we know it now, nor as it is to-day, nor as it is exhibited in any one contemporary person, however purified and exalted. It is a humanity not yet generally manifested, but which yet we feel to be more real and true to the type than the human mediocrity among which we live.

This, then, is what we mean by "Divinity": it is that unseen force which is at the back of all human goodness and love. This is "the only God." And

this force, which is continually producing and manifesting itself in good persons, must itself be personal. That which we call human love and human courage can only come from a source which has in itself all that we mean by personality. That which produces sons must be known and loved as Father. This fatherhood we would worship and love, even though it were destined to disappear before other forces of the world and carry us with it to destruction, but the more we have experience of it, the more certain we are that it is not weak or destined to perish, but that it alone is all-powerful and eternal. Even if it *were* weak, still it would be worshipful ; but love, we know, is not weak ; it is indestructible. This is not only the power which makes the earth a place of solace and of joy, but it is the power which clothes the grass of the field, and rules the courses of the stars. To it we commit our being in faith. This then, and not the angry and petulant potentate of much popular religion, is the only true God, and when we speak of Divinity we mean just this Love which is striving to make itself known in the lives of the best of mankind. So far we shall carry most men of good will. That kind of God they recognise, and they would at least desire to worship. Many people, indeed, believe they have discovered Him for themselves, and build to Him a temple over against that of the angry God whom they believe the Churches worship.

If then, we are sure that we know what we mean by God, we can go on to ask again whether we believe in the divinity of Christ. The question will then mean to us, " Did Christ embody in Himself those

essentials of perfect manhood which are seen and known to us in glimpses here and there in human history, so that we may say that the character which we believe to be divine has actually been manifested in the world?" I believe that there are very few good men to-day who would in this sense deny the divinity of Christ. Rather they would joyfully acknowledge that all which is worshipful in the world is symbolised and manifested in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. They want nothing better to worship, no better example to follow; they need no other God. In that sense they will acknowledge Jesus as divine. But, they will say, this cannot be what the Church means; for we believe that all men are, in their degree, manifesting the same divine life, and the Church will surely deny this. It is melancholy that we should so far have obscured the gospel that people should imagine that the Church teaches that any human goodness can be anything else than, in its degree, a manifestation of the character of God. It is St. Paul himself who taught that, through the regenerating power of Jesus, the life that he lived was no more his own separate life, but the life of Christ in him. It was St. Paul who said that the whole Church was the body of which Jesus was the head (and if the body cannot live without the head, neither is the head complete apart from the body); it was Jesus Himself who said that He was the vine of which we were the branches, and here again the branches are as essential for the full development and fruition of the vine as the stem itself. And yet, in spite of this, one finds that good and thoughtful men will reveal with fear

and caution as a newly-found and somewhat dangerous discovery that, in their opinion, all people in so far as they are like Christ are in their degree divine.

The fact that this should seem to men, who have been brought up in an atmosphere of Church teaching and worship, to be a peculiarly striking and rather dangerous discovery does surely point to the fact that the teaching of the Church upon the person of Christ has left an exceedingly unfortunate impression upon the popular mind. There can be no doubt that the impression left upon the minds of very many thinking men is that they are expected to worship Christ because, although He had more or less the outward appearance of a man and shared some of the purely physical limitations of men, yet He was all the time of a nature totally different from ourselves, and that it is just on account of this total difference that we worship Him. Even when a true and complete Incarnation is preached, there is an undercurrent of teaching which seems to suggest that God, in manifesting Himself as Man, was doing something extremely distasteful, unnatural and unexpected, just as we say sometimes that, when a judge might have been just, he has been most unexpectedly merciful, the implication being that justice and mercy are opposite terms. We have then to press upon men that Mankind was "predestined to the adoption of sons," that, in proportion as Man is really Man, he will inevitably manifest divinity, and that, just because Man is made by God in His own image and likeness, it is natural and fitting that God should manifest Himself as Man. That is His joy, it is the exercise of His true nature

of love, it is part of the "eternal purpose that He purposed" to reveal Himself as Perfect Man. This He has always been doing and is always doing to-day, and just in proportion as any man or woman has received Him, God's nature has there been incarnated in them. The Incarnation will thus be taught, not as being a momentary process, completed once for all at the conception of Jesus, and thereafter carried on by an automatic and inevitable process, but as being a movement eternally predestined, and carried out throughout the whole time process. It is not, as it is so often made to appear, a conversion of God-head into flesh, but a taking of manhood into God, wherever and whenever manhood has been willing to go forward in faith and love to the natural destiny prepared for it, which is to be the image of God's love.

We do not indeed preach, as the Theosophists preach, that there are many Christs and many incarnations, nor do we say that every man is, on his own account, a potential Christ, among many others. For us there is but one Christ, the Christ through whom the worlds were made, the Christ whom Abraham saw and in whom he rejoiced, the Christ who gave drink to the Israelites in the wilderness, the Christ through whom, and of whom, the prophets spake, the Christ who "took manhood into God" through the faith and submission of Mary, but also through the continuous filial love and trust of Jesus, by His victory over temptation, by the faith through which He overcame material and spiritual obstacles, by His death, resurrection and ascension, the Christ who

guided, and still guides and feeds, His Church, who is the new life of all who believe in Jesus, the Christ who is the light which enlightens those who know Him, and also those who ignore Him, the Christ with whom to be united is the only consummation of the life of every man who has ever lived or ever shall live. "In every man the eternal Logos finds and becomes himself, as every man for the first time truly finds himself in Him."¹

The Incarnation, then, is not yet complete. It will not be complete until all men have realised and made effective the nature which Jesus manifested as the Christ. "We do not worship humanity, with the Comtists, but we worship the power that is revealed in human goodness of every sort. Humanity, so far as it stands for the just, the noble, the brave and the true, for those who in any way have crucified, sacrificed, limited themselves for the love of God and for the sake of His kingdom and of their fellow-men, is a mystical Christ, a collective Logos, a word of manifestation of the Father ; and every member of that society is in his measure a Christ or revealer in whom God is made flesh and dwells in our midst."² The experiences of Jesus through which He realised Himself as Eternal Son of God have to become the experiences in some sense of all who would come, through Him, into the knowledge of divine Sonship.³ When we all

¹ Du Bose, "The Œcumenical Councils," p. 336.

² "A Much-abused Letter," by Fr. George Tyrrell, S.J.

³ C'est un des grands principes du Christianisme, que tout ce qui est arrivé à Jesus-Christ doit se passer dans l'âme et dans le corps de chaque Chrétien. (Pascal.)

come "unto the perfect man," then only the Incarnation will be completed, and Christ will have been made fully Man.

Yet there is, in spite of what has been said, a true sense in which we may speak of the work of the Incarnation—the self-realisation of God in humanity—as completed, when Jesus had overcome death, and entered into eternal communion with the Father, through the human experience of growth, and the overcoming of suffering and sin and death. It is in virtue of His being not only *a* man (though He was that), but the manifestation of *all* human nature, that we can say of Him that in His self-realisation all humanity realised its Sonship in God. His was not an exclusive but an inclusive personality. In communion with Him, all men find self-realisation. The truth of this can be explained simply to those unused to theological terms, by the consideration of the lives and teaching of great philosophers and poets. It is a plain fact of experience that most of us who are interested in nature or philosophy do only attain to any respectable degree of knowledge through steeping ourselves in the writings and experience of some great prophetic teachers. The more we do so, the more we attain to our true personality. Our true selves lie hid in the personality of these few great inclusive personalities. In their victories of knowledge and self-realisation our own life finds its true self-expression; that which came to them directly from the unseen, comes to us by adoption into their life and experience. We live in them and through them, and grow more vital as we do so. We "eat their flesh and drink

their blood," and, through assimilating them, we ourselves come into touch with the mind of the universe. If we have realised this, it is not hard for us to understand at least the possibility of there having been one Man who has included in His character and experience all that human nature desires to express and is intended to attain, so that His victories are our victories and His life is our food.

This Jesus declared to be true of Himself. He knew that He held immediate and unhindered communion with the Father, and that His experience included the experience of all humanity, and that His victory over temptation and over physical limitations was the victory of all humanity in Him. "Be of good cheer : I have overcome the world." This could only be a word of encouragement because all mankind won the victory potentially in Him, and this victory becomes actual in so far as it appropriates the life of Jesus, who is its head.

It is, of course, true that no one individual could actually go through the experiences of every class and race of mankind, without ceasing to be a human being at all. No one could be at the same time male and female, rational and feeble-minded, civilised and savage, a philosopher and an illiterate. There are special developments, characteristic of large classes of mankind, which no one person could share, nor is it necessary that they should do so, in order to sum up the deepest experiences of mankind. There is a certain fundamental "ground" of humanity in which there is no longer male or female, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free ; certain deep principles of

life there are in which all share, and in virtue of possessing which, we are human beings, and this ground of humanity it is which the Church found in the life and teaching of Jesus, and it is summed up in His proclamation, and actual demonstration in practice, that Man is "*capax Dei*"—capable of being in practice that which he is already by constitution—Son of God. This is the work of Jesus, by which He is proclaimed to be GOD in MAN.

This view of the Incarnation can, I believe, be made clear to the intelligent, non-theological layman, because he is accustomed to feel that he lives in this or that great scientist or poet or statesman, and finds his true expression in him. A large number of people, for instance, approach nature through the experience and writings of Wordsworth. Without him they would never have known what natural beauty is. He is to them the way of approach, in that particular department of life, to the Father: the Son, in whom they receive the adoption of sons: the priest, through whom they become a chosen priesthood to others. Yet he effects this, not by giving to them something foreign to themselves from without, but by arousing a life pre-existing in them; he makes them conscious for the first time of that which was dormant in them before. So he *is* the true and deepest self to thousands of men; he lives henceforth in them, and that, not by destroying their own life, but by quickening it immeasurably. He is not merely *a* man to them, but, over a large field of life, he *is* Man in his relation to God. Yet all the while he was *a* man also, living in certain limited surroundings with peculiar idiosyn-

crasies and inherited foibles and individual tastes. This idea of an inclusive personality is familiar and appealing.

There are few men who do not feel the universality, the catholic appeal, of the character and teaching of Jesus, apart from the explanations that are offered of it. And they will understand still better, if it can be made clear that we do not desire them merely to know Jesus "after the flesh"—to live in a Palestinian and archaic environment, to find salvation in the topography of Nazareth, or the correct chronology of Holy Week, or in the literal exactitude of the record of this or that evangelist. If we can make it clear that Jesus saves the world and is present with us to-day, not in virtue of this or that episode of His life, which may conceivably be misreported or exaggerated, but by His Spirit, which lives on through the possible imperfections of the record, and through the many corruptions of tradition, then it is not impossible that men may understand what we mean when we say that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

That which does make the whole teaching incredible, and which is to-day separating numbers of intelligent people from the Church, is the setting of God and Man apart as contradictory and incompatible ideas, and then teaching that the hybrid being, who was half God and half man (not, as the Church teaches, wholly God and wholly Man) shows us what He, as demi-god could do, and we can never expect to do ; who is only Man so far as man is weak and feeble and ineffective ; who hungers as man, but creates bread as God, who suffers as Man, and rises again as God, who grieves

over sickness and death as man, but heals the sick and raises the dead as God. Such a being neither brings God nearer to us, nor does it do anything to raise our conception of human nature. Such a life is of less help to us than the lives of "mere men" who do at least achieve great victories by virtue of a real humanity in which we share. But this, thank God, is the sorriest caricature of the teaching of the Church, which, in spite of archaic language and in spite of a very deficient apparatus of criticism, had a true instinct for right decisions on the great facts of life. The Church teaches that Christ everywhere acted as true Man as well as true God. He healed the sick and stilled the storm, and cast out devils, because such mastery over the power of evil belongs of right to man, in so far as man realises his powers. It is a part of his foreordained destiny. Because He did great works, we shall do greater; because He lives unto God, we shall live also. Not that each one of us is a complete Christ—but humanity, living by Him and abiding in Him, is Christ incarnate. We do not, it is surely needless to say, mean to imply that Jesus is an epitome of *average* humanity, which is to be set up for the worship of the world—the cult of the average man. If that were so, how should Christ judge the world? Average humanity can pass no valid judgment on itself. But we do constantly find that the higher self within us does pass judgment on the lower, and Jesus Christ is at once the symbol and the epitome of this higher self. He is the final judge just in so far as He stands for real, actual Man—true Son of the Eternal Father, and God "hath committed all

judgment unto the Son"—it is the Eternal Son (that which we call our true self) whose property it is to incarnate Himself in man who is the Judge of average mankind.

"As by man came death, *by man* came also the resurrection of the dead." The degradation of the race was wrought from within, by a failure of the corporate will ; the redemption of the race is also wrought from within, beginning with a genuine human experience of the Divine Man manifested in a true human life. It is a real redemption of man by man, not merely a redemption affected *ab extra* by the power and love of God acting immediately on sinful man. So all His achievements are ours also ; He is our Saviour, just because He could not be apart from us, any more than we could be apart from Him ; we could more easily tear England out of our lives than we could tear Jesus out of our past history, our present experience, and our future destiny.

"Does he believe in the divinity of Christ ?" the parson asks about his intelligent layman. That will largely depend on what the parson himself believes and teaches about that divinity. If he believes that all that is worshipful in humanity is divine, if he believes that God is Love, if he preaches that the Word was true man, and had a true experience in which we all share, that He is not only *a* man but all men (first in Jesus, then in all of us), then he can at all events hope to make the layman share his belief. But so far has popular religion travelled away from this belief that such a gospel, if it comes from the pulpit, will sound wonderful and strange to many a man, who in his

heart worships Jesus because indeed He is the true Man, the man he believes he himself is meant to be, and hopes by God's grace he will be at last, but who will never allow that Jesus is God, lest by doing so he should be robbed of the human Christ who is his brother-man.

CHAPTER XIII

“IS THE CHURCH CHRISTIAN ?”

No one who has an intimate knowledge of the inner life and outward activities of the Church of England in different parts of the world, and has some experience of the manifold varieties of circumstances represented by church life, in town and country, in rich parishes and poor parishes, theological colleges and elementary schools, can reasonably doubt that there is a really wonderful and Christian spirit pervading the life of the Church as a whole. Everywhere you will find beautiful, sincere, Christian lives being lived, an atmosphere of charity and truthfulness, which endears the Church not only to those who belong to her by birth and tradition but to the many who are won to her from outside her own borders. Even those who feel most keenly her shortcomings would, as a general rule, hasten to say that they know of no other Christian communion which supplies so many of those needs of the soul for the supply of which the Church exists. She may have her great faults, but they are faults which look so black very largely because the Church leads us to expect such great things from the attractive-

ness of the presentation of the Christian life which she puts before us. It is the beauty of the lives led within the Church which makes men marvel at the chaos of her government and the shameless abuses of her corporate life. So patent, very often, is the contrast between the individual piety and the corporate impiety of the Church that men are moved to ask whether its members are not leading Christian lives in spite of their membership of the Church rather than by reason of it.

If, however, we are to be just to the Church we must remember that this phenomenon of the co-existence of individual excellence and corporate stagnation is not an isolated characteristic of the Church alone. It is very characteristic of all English institutions. Nearly all Englishmen are delighted to point out how well institutions work which have nothing in theory to commend them. It is a positive joy to them to reflect that the most irrational arrangements for government prove themselves in practice to be admirable in their working, whereas those which are the result of infinite forethought, founded on irrefutable theory, do in the long run cover themselves with confusion as with a cloak. Some of the most patent scandals in Church and State have so long survived, just because it has seemed to Englishmen in general that arrangements so totally lacking in principle must of necessity be of supernatural origin. This temper of mind shows itself when we hear it said of the National Mission (by people who are probably very ill-informed) that the idea was so widely disliked and so generally criticised that it must surely be the work of the Holy

Ghost. This recalls the dictum of a great judge that an "Act of God" was to be defined as an occurrence for which no rational cause could be assigned. The Church must not therefore be condemned for its cheerful and complacent acquiescence in old-standing abuses, as though this were in strong contrast to the conditions prevailing elsewhere in our national life. The Church in this demeanour merely reflects the outlook upon life generally prevailing among Englishmen—a distaste for, and disbelief in, all alterations in government, especially when they are recommended upon the ground of principle and theory, together with a positive adoration of ancient relics and decaying ruins.

The charges against the Church which are, in spite of all the good which exists within it, so very generally made, ought more truly to be made against our national life as a whole. But it is also, of course, true that the Church in a nation exists not merely to reflect the whims and caprices (side by side with the virtues and honourable traits) of national character, but to overcome in her own life, and therefore to be able to lead the way for the nation to overcome, those faults and weaknesses to which each nation is peculiarly liable. If, as Lord Acton says, "it is a vice and not a merit to live for expedients, and not for ideas," how great is the condemnation which should be passed upon a Church which positively revels in expedients and antique survivals. It is no complete answer to the charge that the Church's life presents great scandals to assert that the same is true of the life of the nation. If that is all the defence which the

Church can offer, those outside will very rightly ask what valid reason there is against closing down a Church which merely presents a replica of the nation's vices, idiosyncrasies and ideals.

The gravamen of the charge against the Church is, not so much that there are certain definite abuses in her corporate life, as that there is a general atmosphere of acquiescence in all that is conventional and worldly. No one knows clearly what ideal of life the Church (as distinguished from the many holy-minded men and women among her members) really stands for, unless it is for that of a kindly and good-natured toleration of things as they are, with a mild desire that they may grow better in time, so far as that is compatible with the maintenance of existing vested interests.

The Church, as a whole, is seldom apparently deeply moved. Only one subject really moves it to heroic exertions and to displays of genuine and undoubted zeal. That subject, unfortunately, is the maintenance of its own establishment and endowments. No one who has witnessed the thoroughness, and capacity for minute and successful organisation, shown by the Church in combating the attack upon its own endowments in Wales can doubt the ability of the Church to lead and direct a great public agitation. Crowded public meetings, constant and unremitting pressure upon individuals, sermons, and "days of prayer," excursion trains to London from distant provincial cities, street processions with banners, skilful political agitations at Parliamentary elections, an able propaganda in the Press, a constant and

well-directed stream of money, all the arts known to the skilled political agent, all have been utilised, and very ably utilised, to maintain the Church's political alliance with the nation, and to preserve the endowments of her clergy. No one can truthfully say that the Church is lacking in zeal or in capacity for enthusiasm, or in the ability to direct a great campaign. The misfortune, and it is a tragic misfortune, is that other and far greater causes fail to arouse the Church to any enthusiasm at all. After all, if the Church in England and Wales were to be disestablished and disendowed to-morrow, few people can feel sure that she would, in regard to her deepest spiritual influence, be any weaker at all, and many of us believe that she would be far stronger. Neither the central verities of her faith nor the innermost springs of her spiritual life and power are in any degree threatened, and it is possible even that, if she had said to those who would take away her establishment, "Take my endowments also," both her faith in God and her capacity for spiritual work would have been immensely confirmed. There is no Christian law binding us to fight for our temporal possessions, but there is a spiritual law bidding us to see that the lives of others, the poor and needy, be not jeopardised by our neglect.

The Church feels the need, in theory at least, for a witness to the right which the hireling has to a living wage. That right its leaders have nobly and justly voiced. The Bishops of the Northern Province passed, just about the period of the Welsh Disestablishment Controversy,¹ the following excellent resolution :—

¹ March 7th, 1914.

"Holding as Christians that the individual life of every person is sacred, and that we are, therefore, bound not to tolerate any department of our industry being permanently carried on under conditions which involve the misery and want of the labourer, we believe it to be the fundamental Christian principle of wages that the first charge upon any industry should be the proper maintenance of the labourers; and we, therefore, declare our adhesion to this principle, which has been called the principle of the living wage, and pledge ourselves to co-operate in promoting its extended application in whatever way we can, both by our prayers and by our private and public action."

These are brave and true words, worthy indeed of a great Church which claims to represent the nation, but the apathy and indifference which the Church at large has shown towards this noble vindication of the rights of labour are in very marked and painful contrast to the extraordinary display of business acumen and organising ability in the engineering of the campaign against disestablishment and disendowment. No organisation exists in the Church to protect these threatened rights of labour, unless we count the little scattered branches of the Christian Social Union which lead an extremely precarious and obscure existence in our great provincial towns, gathering little audiences of a score or so of Church folk together for a few meetings in each year, and protesting that they have no intention of committing themselves to any conclusions which might appear to be in any way contentious. How great is the contrast between these pitiful meetings of earnest enthusiasts, generally unsupported by

authority, and the crowded and uproarious meetings, with the platform packed with peers and prelates, when disendowment is in the air.

It is altogether to the good that the Northern Bishops should have resolved to co-operate both by their prayers, and by their public and private action, in vindicating the principle of the living wage ; and it will no doubt appear during the forthcoming Mission what steps they propose to take to deepen the repentance of the Church and to inspire it with hope, in view of the work of enforcing this great Christian principle ; but if these efforts, to which the Bishops have so solemnly pledged themselves, are to have any effect upon the public mind, they must be pursued with at least as great vigour as those which were so skilfully directed towards retaining the endowments of the clergy. There must be an end to the contention that the clergy need material means, secured by very material methods, to carry on spiritual work, whereas to agitate politically for a living wage for labourers is to neglect higher spiritual issues and to degrade religion to the level of politics.

We have, then, good reason to expect from our leaders an agitation at least as vigorous and whole-hearted on the question of the living wage as that which we experienced during the last few years on the Welsh Disestablishment question. This campaign is no doubt not so greatly needed during the present war, while the demand for workers has led to a great improvement in the status of labour ; but there is one industry at least in which the Church is so vitally interested that it cannot afford to ignore its responsibility.

The industry of agriculture is, over large parts of England, one of the most sweated of our national trades. Not only in regard to wages, but in regard to housing and to any hope of future advancement, the lot of the village labourer is, on all hands, admitted to be deplorable.¹ The contention of the farmer is that he cannot, after paying rent and tithe and other charges, and securing a moderate profit for himself, afford a living wage to his labourer. It is plain that the farmer is entitled to a living; it is plain that, under our present system, the landlord is, *qua* capitalist, entitled to a fair rate of interest upon the capital which he has expended on the land; and the same is true of the farmer in so far as he, too, has sunk capital in his farm. But, so the Bishops quite rightly insist, the provision of a living wage to the labourer is a primary necessity to the right carrying on of the business—it is, indeed, they say, a "*first charge*" upon the industry. It would, then, clearly come before tithe, the payment of which, though sanctioned both by law and age-long custom, is not a vital necessity to agriculture. Agriculture could not exist without capital, labour, and expert management, but it could, quite conceivably, exist without the tithe-owner. It becomes, then, a matter of plain and obvious sincerity that the Church, which has undertaken, "both by public and private action," to vindicate the

¹ For a detailed and expert account of the condition of the agricultural labourer, the reader should consult *Land and Labour*, published by the Collegium, 92, St. George's Square, S.W. It must be remembered that the real crux of the rural housing question is that the agricultural labourer cannot, out of his wages, pay for a decent and sanitary cottage.

principle of the living wage as a first charge upon industry, should forthwith decide whether the receiving of tithe by the Church is morally compatible with the payment of the present wages to labourers in that industry from which the tithe is derived.¹

It also becomes a pressing question whether those Church corporations, which own among them a vast area of land, are not morally bound, in letting their land, to make such fair wages clauses in their leases as are inserted in other contracts in other trades by Government departments, even if this should involve a loss of rent in consequence.² The Church is urgently called at this time to show the sincerity of its professions ; professions not made lightly or at haphazard, but solemnly and deliberately on the most public occasions and in the most binding manner. If this resolution remains a dead letter, or if it is not taken up with that zeal of which the Church is capable on occasions which really move her, the effect upon the public conscience will quite rightly be that the Church cares far more for the privileges of the clergy than for the necessities of the poor.

If, however, the Church is to clear her reputation in this matter of the ownership of property, it is very desirable that the public should know where

¹ This might be remedied by Land Courts, which fixed a judicial wage and rent, allotting a fixed proportion of the rent to the tithe-owner.

² No insuperable difficulty would, so I am informed by an eminent authority on Political Economy, be encountered in putting this principle into practice, and it would, so the same authority remarks, be an admirable example for the Church to set. The Church has already made experiments in the management of urban house property, under the advice of the late Miss Octavia Hill, and these experiments are of considerable value.

the responsibility lies for the administration of the Church's possessions. Much of this property, of course, belongs to individual incumbents in right of their office. These can scarcely be expected to act individually, nor could they rightly do anything which would seriously compromise the legal rights of their successors. But a great deal of property is held by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. It is very difficult for the general public to find out who is responsible for the administration of these estates. Anyone consulting *Whitaker's Almanack* would gather that a large majority of these Commissioners are Bishops who, it would be supposed, could enforce their wishes upon their lay colleagues ; but it is true, I believe, that the administration of the estates is, by statute, in the hands of Estate Commissioners, and that they are not responsible for their administration (except as to matters of general policy) to the rest of the Commissioners. It is desirable that this should be made clear, for it is not untrue to say that even some of the Bishops themselves are not aware of the measure of responsibility which may, or may not, lie upon them for the administration of these vast properties, and especially is this important in view of the wholly Christian and progressive opinions concerning property to which they have officially committed themselves. The property owned by this great Ecclesiastical Trust is so vast and so varied, dealing not only with agricultural land, but with urban housing, coal mining, the control of minerals, the administration of great manors and popular pleasure resorts, that its example must necessarily be of vast importance in the social and economic life of the

nation. The only possible justification for the Temporal Power of the Church, and its appearance before the world as a large and powerful commercial Trust, is that it shall be, in its management of its goods, a model to all other commercial undertakings.

It is all the more to be desired that the extent of this responsibility should be clearly understood, inasmuch as there is a very general outcry against what appears to be the excessive incomes of the Bishops as compared with those of many of their most hard-working clergy. How, for instance (people will say), is a bishop justified in receiving an official income of £5,000 a year, and appointing a man to a parish worth £170 a year, with a population of over 10,000 ? Now, if all the facts were known to the public, there may be every possible deduction to be made from the force of this seemingly glaring anomaly. But the fact remains that the impression persists that, after all is said which might be said in mitigation of the contrast,¹ it is hardly consistent with the principle enunciated by the Bishops of the living wage that so large an income should be received by one servant of the Church until all servants of the Church are more adequately paid. The answer most generally given to the charge that Bishops are receiving princely incomes, while so many of their clergy are receiving incomes which make it necessary for societies to exist to provide them with worn-out clothing, is that the income is necessitated by the size of the official house. There is no doubt that these large official

¹ Probably in such a case the income is made up by public grants to at least £200 a year, but this is scarcely an adequate living wage for so great a charge.

houses are responsible for very much of the prejudice against the Church and for the isolation of the Bishop from his clergy, as well as for the expenditure of money which is badly needed elsewhere. Here, again, it is not plain to the general public where the responsibility lies for the decision to spend money on gardens, furniture and servants in preference to the support of living agents. Clearly the choice is not always that of the Bishop himself. When Dr. Stubbs was appointed to the See of Oxford, he struggled hard to escape from the magnificent prison of Cuddesdon. "I cannot live at Cuddesdon, and if I had had any idea of the nature of the life there, I would never have accepted the See. My whole life, work, substance, will, and deed are at the service of the Church; but to live a slave to gardeners and coachmen would be death at once both to me and to my wife. . . ." Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister at the time, was willing to "get an Order in Council for the sale of the Palace." Archbishop Benson vigorously opposed the sale, on several grounds, among others that in the future the wives of the Bishop and the Dean would be likely to quarrel if they both lived in Oxford! So the sale of the Palace was refused. The Prime Minister puts the blame upon the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. "I heard with dismay," he writes, "that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners refused to let you sell Cuddesdon. I almost wish that you had given the whole Commission a chance of voting." (Apparently, then, the whole of the Commission, including a majority of Bishops, could have voted.) The Bishop never became reconciled to Cuddesdon, we are told. "The expense

of even such a simple 'state' as he was forced to keep was a continual distress to him. 'Have I three glass-houses?' he said, when he had been a long time at Cuddesdon. He could not bear to see the things which seemed to him to cost so much. And the reason was that he was always thinking, thinking with acute distress, of the sad tales which reached him, and guessing at those which did not, of the poverty of the clergy in his large agricultural diocese. 'It is for this, and this,' he would continually say, 'that I cannot help where I would.' And every sum that he spent on long tours about the diocese, on horses and carriages, and men-servants and maid-servants; every journey that a poor clergyman had to make to see his Bishop in his distant dwelling place, he felt as a personal trouble."¹

This was not the experience of a Radical Bishop with utilitarian sentiments, but of one of whom Lord Acton said: "There is not a greater Tory in the whole of England, or a greater ornament of that perverse party," and of one, moreover, of the greatest historians and antiquaries of his age, who could estimate, as few others could, the value of antiquity and tradition. No doubt the advent of the motor-car has modified many of the conditions existing twenty-five years ago, but it remains true that the Church has to make up its mind whether it wants its Bishops to spend their money on glass-houses and men-servants and maid-servants, or upon expenditure more obviously related to the salvation of souls, and if it is decided that souls are

¹ "Letters of William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford," pp. 292-297.

more likely to be saved by the retention of the glass-houses than by their abolition, we ought to know who it is who is responsible for the decision. It is most clearly not always the Bishops.

It is commonly held by those who desire the retention of the palaces and of the incomes—much larger than that of the Secretary of State of the United States—which of necessity go with them, that it is delightful for the clergy to stay, together with their wives, in these historic abodes. Probably the clergy would very far rather have a little more money to spend with their families at the seaside. It is worthy of notice that the men who are most consulted by the clergy, in anxiety or on matters of business, live, as often as not, in quite small houses. If you want a man's advice or even his friendship, you do not want necessarily to stay the night or to dine with him, and very often the unwonted splendours of a large house make the whole atmosphere somewhat distasteful to a man who is used to living in extreme simplicity. No one who knows anything of the lives of our modern Bishops could accuse them of self-indulgent living, or believe for one moment that they cling to these palaces for sordid reasons, but the point of the charge against them is that they give the impression that, unlike Bishop Stubbs, they make no great effort to alter the social conditions which make all great houses and great incomes an obvious anomaly. Meanwhile, other great leaders of men find their influence not impaired by living in quite small and unpretending abodes, and give acceptable counsel without a dinner.

I am not urging that the right course is necessarily

to sell the houses. There is much to be said for their retention. I am only arguing that it is quite impossible to retain them without scandal, until all those out of whose labours the incomes which maintain the houses are derived, are receiving a living wage.

To almost all the scandals alleged against the public life of the Church of England, there is the answer made that although, on the face of it, the scandal appears to be great, in practice, and when the circumstances are fully understood, there is no scandal at all. For instance, it certainly appears a scandal that the Crown should give free choice of election of a Bishop to a Dean and Chapter, and nominate at the same time a person whom the Chapter are bound to elect, and the Archbishop to consecrate, on pain of the forfeiture of their goods. It seems odd that the Dean and Chapter, having solemnly received the Sacrament and invoked the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the choice of a suitable bishop, should invariably and without exception proceed to elect the man whom the Government—presided over possibly by a Prime Minister who is not a member of the Church—has already publicly nominated.¹ No doubt we are told that many Chapters are prepared to make another choice, but the public notes that as a matter of fact they never do. It appears a scandal that a man appointed to be a Bishop Suffragan should be solemnly set apart as a Bishop and ruler in the Church, when the intention is that he should be merely a curate to the Bishop, with—in many cases—no responsibility and no oversight at all,

¹ An Act for the restrayning the Payment of Annates (25 Henry viii. cap. xxx).

and less chance for the exercise of government than an ordinary priest. It appears to be a scandal when a priest is nominated to a living by an agnostic, a Jew, a Mohammedan, by a man of notoriously immoral life, or by some person who has never set foot in the parish, or by a dissenter who desires to have his views, as far as may be, taught in the parish. It is true that, if the appointment is one that is scandalous to the degree of making it desirable to take legal action, the Bishop can, and doubtless does, refuse to institute. But why does the Church tolerate the abuse of private patronage at all? Here is an extract from a deed addressed to a new incumbent by the Bishop of the diocese. "To which (benefice) you have been presented unto us by AB, CD, EF, the true and undoubted patrons of the Church and benefice, as Mortgagees of the Advowson or right of Patronage of the said Benefice, upon the nomination of GH, the person entitled to the equity of redemption of the said advowson, an infant . . . (such nomination being made by the advice and with the approbation of JK [guardian of the said infant])."

Really it does seem incredible that we should acquiesce any longer in this trafficking and mortgaging of the sacred right of appointing a man to the cure of souls. Should we not rather say to these mortgagees: "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou thoughtest to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter"? In this particular case, as in many others, all the persons concerned were honourable and good people, and an excellent appointment was made; but the system itself seems to me,

and I should have thought would seem to most Christian people, utterly corrupt and unspeakable.

Here is another case where the patron has not one yard of land in the parish, nor have his family ever had any estate in the neighbourhood. He takes, it is true, most conscientious pains, as most private and public patrons do, to find the right man for the place, but why does the Church give such a right to a man who may be not even baptised nor a professing Christian, and may be a man of notoriously evil life ? Or take a very different case, the case of a landlord who owns the whole village and perhaps many adjacent villages. His patronage of the Church is often justified on the ground that the village "belongs" to him. But is not that the very fact which causes such deep and just resentment in many of our villages—that the lives of the people, and not only their lands and houses, are "owned" by one man ? And the fact that he is a good man does not make very much difference to the deep resentment evoked. The English people, in villages as well as in towns, are prone to desire to determine the conduct of their own lives, even though they do it less effectually than it could be done by a heaven-sent autocrat. Is it not the place of the Church to be able to say : " At least there is *one* place in the village where the landowner has no patronage, and *one* person who comes here sent direct by the Church or chosen by yourselves, and not by the man, be he good or bad, who owns your fields and houses " ? But the Church of England says : " No ; we can conceive nothing more natural and fitting than that the squire who owns your houses

should also choose your priest. Who should better know your spiritual needs than the man who receives your rents?" It appears, again, to be a scandal that if that same squire sells the whole village to a colliery company he can sell also the rights of patronage, and sell it by auction if he likes.¹ And here again some people will say: "Who better could control the spiritual destinies of the colliers, who have taken the place of the farm labourers, than the priest who is chosen by the new proprietors of the colliery? Surely the shareholders will wish to provide a good priest for their employees."

It is not disputed that these private patrons have done their work on the whole admirably, and very often a parish will prefer to be under a private patron rather than under an episcopal patron who is apt to appoint a man on the ground that he has been twenty years a curate, and that no other patron has found it desirable to appoint him to any other living. Yet it is surely not wholly unconnected with our system of private patronage that the Church has never made any real protest against the social conditions of our country villages. A man who is known to have taken a prominent part, however ably and courteously, in such an agitation is not likely to commend himself to patrons drawn wholly from one social class, and a priest who did so would naturally not commend himself to the landowner or mortgagee to whom the Church commits this solemn trust.

Another great evil is the reliance of the Church upon

¹ The advowson must not be put up to auction unless sold with a manor of not less than 100 acres.

“private means,” to take the place of the public maintenance of the clergy. It sounds admirable that a clergyman should, on being instituted to a charge of souls, take an oath that he has not undertaken to pay any sum of money in order to obtain the living; but when we hear a Bishop declare that, in the majority of cases in which he has to appoint a rector or vicar, he has to find out, not who is the best man for the parish, but who is the best among those possessing private means which can be utilised to supplement the inadequate official income of the parish, we wonder whether in practice there is much use in the oath which seemed at first sight so salutary. It is quite a common occurrence in Church life that the best man cannot be appointed to a parish because he is not sufficiently wealthy.

There are answers, more or less satisfactory, to all these and many such like abuses; but we must not forget that it is the general impression which remains in people's minds when the answers are forgotten. We have been recently reminded¹ that in the earliest ages of the Church the heathen tried to furnish elaborate justifications for their outworn mythologies. “Plutarch and those like him were the victims of a kind of intellectual self-deception which would amount to dishonesty if it were not unconscious. They did not really believe the mythologies which formed the basis of popular heathenism—they were too well-educated and too intelligent. But they feared the breach in the continuity of tradition which would be suffered if they

¹ “The Stewardship of Faith,” Lake, p. 110.

admitted its falsity. Therefore they said: 'It is true—symbolically' . . . But the public ear is never kept by anyone who has constantly to stop in order to explain that what he is saying is only symbolically true, when the language in which it is expressed was clearly intended literally by those who first made use of it." There is a true lesson here for the Church. Every scandal and every anomaly can be shown to be in practice not half so bad as it looks on paper; but the public, and especially the earnest and sincere public, will forget the excuse and remember the facts. If the Church is afraid of losing the rich and the conventional, and those who cling to the traditions of men, then verily it will have its reward; but it will be at the price of the alienation of the sincere and simple and thoughtful people who are even now either leaving the Church or taking no pains to see that their children remain in it. Forms of belief that need constant explanation and elaborate glosses, policies which are meant to conciliate the rich and powerful, and are explained away to other classes, high-sounding resolutions which are not acted upon, earnest expressions of sympathy which lead to no action—all these will not prevent men from turning away to a new form of Christianity which has perhaps no ancient traditions but has its face towards the future and not always to the past. And let us remember that we of the rank and file have no reason to lay the blame of our disasters upon the Bishops alone. Owing to our system of appointment they are mostly men who come to their posts at an age when most men dread change. Tradition puts obstacles in the way of their resignation,

even when they are long past three-score years and ten.¹ People do not ask them to lead, and most often resent it when they do. Yet in spite of this, it is the Bishops who are as a rule ahead of the clergy, and the clergy who are ahead of the representative laity, in all matters of theological re-statement and of social reform, and those in the ranks who do not work publicly and vigorously for reform are cowardly if they attempt to put all the blame upon their leaders. "My people love to have it so" is true of the Church of England as a whole to-day, and the shame of our futility rests upon us all alike.

It is true that these abuses have not so far very largely interfered with the spiritual life of the Church. The feudal system which has lingered on so long in England when it had disappeared elsewhere has accustomed us to all manner of quaint and venial abuses in our political and social life. In our villages the squire has been thought of naturally as God's vicegerent, and, on the principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio*, it seemed natural that the squire—or his mortgagees—should appoint the priest; and similarly that the Whigs or the Tories should appoint Whig or Tory Bishops. But these quaint survivals have almost disappeared in political life; and if they continue long to survive in Church life, it will only be because no one takes Church life seriously enough to demand their abolition. But we shall never get a strong and independent laity

¹ The average age of our Bishops is 66, of our Generals 53, and of the Judges of the King's Bench 60. It is surely to be desired that an age limit should be set to all tenure of public offices. Resignation need not by any means entail the end of public usefulness.

while we deny to the communicants the rights which we concede to the squire or his money-lenders, and we shall not gain fellowship with the working-man, however sincerely we proffer it, so long as we allow our clergy to gain their incomes out of the proceeds of sweated industries. The men and women who are growing up to-day are simply not interested in an institution which has to explain and to translate and apologise for its machinery and its laws on the ground that they are three hundred and fifty years old, and would fall to pieces if they were touched. They may be amused at it as a quaint survival, but they feel that it is inconceivable that it should be an organ of the Kingdom of God. We are asking God at this moment to give us the new wine, but have we got the new bottles ready to receive it? Are we ready for new formulations of the old beliefs, new outpourings of prayer and praise, new rules for government and social expression? It is just as true for the Church as it is for the individual, "He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that hateth his life for my sake shall find it unto Life Eternal."

Is the Church ready to hate the old secular setting of its spiritual life, so that it may find its new expression, which will come to it inevitably according to the law of its own spiritual growth?

No professions of piety will be accepted by God or men as a substitute for this definite amendment of our corporate sins.

Note.—Since this Chapter was in print there has appeared the admirable Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State (S.P.C.K., 2s. 6d.), which shows that the authorities of the Church are thoroughly alive to the need of reform.—[EDITOR.]

PART IV

THE CHURCH AND LABOUR

BY THE REV. F. LEWIS DONALDSON

Vicar of St. Mark's, Leicester.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW TO MAKE THE CHURCH REALLY THE CHURCH OF THE PEOPLE.

I

IN one sense the title of this paper is open to criticism. For the Church is not to be made but recognised. As Archbishop Temple once said : “ Men were not brought to Christ, and then determined that they would live in community. In the New Testament, on the contrary, the Kingdom of Heaven is already in existence, and they are invited into it. The Church takes its origin, not in the will of man, but in the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Church, therefore, is not man-made, but Christ-made ; it was founded, not by man, but by God ; it was established, not by law, but by love—the love eternal. “ Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them. . . .” The Church is by history, tradition, and, far more, by its constitution, the Church of the people. The democracy of the Church is based upon the divine humanity of our Lord in His Incarnation. The great sacrament of initiation, holy baptism, is not only the consecration of the individual,

but also the instrument by which any person, man, woman or child, is admitted into the universal brotherhood of the Church Catholic.

Nothing could be more democratic. There is no religion, no political party, no social circle, no sect but submits its members to some sort of exclusive test. The Church alone has none. The person to be baptized can claim membership by virtue of his humanity, and the baptism of one person is the proclamation of God's will for all the rest.

This is stated to safeguard the truth imperilled, in some measure, by the title "How to *make* the Church really the Church of the people."

But for practical purposes the title stands. For it suggests the grave, and, I think, the growing evil of the separation of masses of the people from the Christian tradition and from the profession and practice of the Christian religion, and the organisation of these masses not within but without the Body which was intended by our Lord to be the home of all human fellowship and good.

When we consider the character of the Church's charter and constitution, the contrast between this character and the facts of our time are, indeed, startling; so startling as to be, *a priori*, incredible. For we find the Church, as an organised body, disowned by the very classes of whom it was originally and mainly, though not entirely, composed, *i.e.*, the ordinary "poor," the respectable working-classes of our Lord's day and generation.

II

Now, when we pass from the facts of the case to consider causes, we shall find first that this separation of the poor from the organisation of the Church is due neither to lack of natural religion, nor to antipathy to the ministrations of religion as such. For there is little agnosticism among the poorer classes, and still less formal criticism. Again, there is no antipathy among the masses of the people to the Christian Faith or to the name and personality of its Founder. At the name of Jesus the knees of these mighty millions, in a real sense, bow. It is not against Him but against the "Churches" that their minds are set. "Most of the working men and women," says a labour leader, "do believe in Jesus Christ." Some time ago on Tower Hill a crowd of men flung up their caps when the name of Jesus Christ was mentioned, and shouted "Hurrah!" "Christianity," wrote Mr. George Haw, "is not assailed; but *Christians*," and "nowhere is a word breathed against Jesus Christ." No! it is not lack of natural religious feeling nor lack of reverence for our Lord that has estranged the common people from the Church; but the practical apostasy of the Church itself.¹ "The Name of God," wrote St. Paul to the Romans, "is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." It is the faithlessness of the Church in its organised capacity, and the inconsistency of those who formally represent the Church, which has separated the common people from us, and has alienated them from the ordinances of religion. It is a sentimental

¹ The Church as officially organised and represented.

alienation. It is their *hearts* that we have lost. "The workers have left the Church because the Church first left them," says one writing with authority and experience on this subject ; and again "Labour feels that whatever emancipation it has won has been won, not on account of the Churches, but often enough in spite of the Churches."

Is this not true ?

For centuries the labouring poor have been struggling for a better, happier human lot. What has been the record of the official Church with regard to these struggles ? Broadly considered, a steady lack of sympathy, generally a captious criticism, frequently a relentless opposition ; and, in the hour of the people's victory, a grudging and patronising recognition.

The labouring classes have lived under a terrible industrial tyranny. For generations they have been ill-paid, ill-housed, ill-nurtured, ill-taught. They have seen their class brutalised by the industrial revolution and the factory system. They have watched their wives and children lacking the prime necessities of life. Down to our own day they have experienced all the vicissitudes and tragedies of want. At times of crisis they have lifted up appealing hands to the organisations called by the name of Jesus Christ, only to be rebuked, rebuffed, repressed ! Can we wonder that, with a true instinct, they have repudiated formal religion, and have left its professors to themselves ? How can we marvel at this ? Why are we puzzled at their alienation from a Church which, for centuries, has been in close alliance with those powers of privilege that were set against the people, against their

appeal, their claims, and their ideals! Who can measure the fearful folly which marked the ecclesiastical handling of labour problems in the greater part of the nineteenth century? Who can excuse the dull disregard by the mass of "professors of religion" of the claims and aspirations of the movements of the poor? The situation in the last century can be described only by some such phrase as "the apostasy of the Church."

III

Whence, then, is this apostasy? I think we shall find the causes deep down in the fact that the Church, as an institution, allowed itself to become an annexe of the State, and, secondarily, allowed itself to be "exploited" by the powerful and privileged classes of the nation. The Church of England became a "class" Church, hardly distinguishable from the world. The rights of the poor, safeguarded in some measure in olden times by the Catholic tradition, became gradually absorbed by the "possessing" classes of society. That which the political and ecclesiastical revolution began, the industrial revolution completed. Land, educational establishments (schools and universities), and capital ¹ became more and more alienated from the masses of the people, and more and more absorbed by the smaller and "possessing" classes of society, while the Church itself became a monopoly of the well-to-do; until we reach the conditions facing us at the opening

¹ Early in the nineteenth century it was possible for a comparatively poor man to be a capitalist; in the twentieth century it is almost impossible.

of the present century. The rich, now largely divorced from feudal obligations, are still the "patrons" of the Church benefices ; they mainly absorb the great offices of State ; appoint Bishops, direct affairs, and control the offices of religion. The possessing¹ classes fill the offices of the Church, legal, diocesan, and educational. They set the "tone" of "Church opinion," possess the daily Press and ecclesiastical newspapers. Nay more, so subtle is the class-spirit that it invades the domain of ethics and theology, and professors of Church and university, all unconscious of their own class bias, sometimes saintly and spiritually gifted men, unite with less worthy powers to deprecate the movements of the people for light, liberty, and life.

Thus, in his essay on "the gifts of civilisation," R. W. Church, then Dean of St. Paul's, a gifted writer and a saintly soul, writes, "Civilisation means *to us* liberty, and the power of bearing and using liberty ; it means that which ensures for us a peaceful life, a life of our own fenced in from wrong and with our path and ends left free to us." Dean Church wrote these words in all sincerity ; without seeing apparently that his description of civilisation applied only to the small and possessing classes of society ; oblivious, apparently, of the repudiation of "civilisation" by millions of the poor, as tyrannical and oppressive and as exploiting themselves and their children. Another eminent Dean openly and frequently challenges the movements of the people as "materialistic"—those

¹ In the phrase "possessing classes" I include those of the middle class who have become part of the governing classes and have assimilated their ideas.

movements the mainspring of which is the desire to achieve a fuller, better, human lot, and something of the opportunity for culture and light, so abundantly provisioned by civilisation for small circles of men and women, including Deans, but so far out of the reach of the masses of the labouring and poorer classes of society. I do not think we can deprecate too strongly these cynical references of highly placed Church officials to the movements of the people towards better material conditions of life.

IV

Apart from the fact that these struggles for material good are nearly always symbolic of immaterial or spiritual desires, the appeal for better industrial conditions, for higher wage, and more economic independence being, in reality, but an expression of need for health, leisure, culture and spiritual opportunity, it surely ill becomes us to whom all these things, both spiritual and material, are assured, to prate of "content" to those whose harsh conditions of toil and life we have never shared. Still less does it become us to gibe at or even to belittle the efforts of the labouring poor for the betterment of their earthly lot, as springing from mere avarice or coveting of "the loaves and fishes."¹

I do not intend to imply that this unjust and inaccurate criticism is as common as it was, but the frame of mind which it discloses is still characteristic of too

¹ An actual description by a Dean of the Labour activities.

many of those whom the common people would naturally suppose to represent "religion," and in a minor degree is characteristic of the attitude of innumerable Church people.

It is this frame or attitude of mind, which betrays not only ignorance of the real motive and inspiration of Labour in its movements, which I designate as a practical apostasy from the "glad-tidings" of the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is quite obvious that in this attitude we are out of touch with His original preaching of the Kingdom. He came as the Lord of Life, in liberation of spirit from sin, of mind from error, of body from disease and death. He proclaimed a fellowship or communion which would involve a real renewal of our social system if faithfully applied to modern life.

It is here that the modern labour movements are nearer to His Gospel than many of us, His official followers, have faith to see. For the essential, as distinct from the accidental, claims of those movements consist in the appeal for renewal of life, for body, mind and spirit. "Give us life" is and always has been the cry of the people in their movements of reform. "You are withholding us from life," "loose us and let us go!" This is not less a spiritual appeal because the present slavery is that of *industrial* oppression and servitude. For this appeal for freedom, combined with the effort and organisation to attain it, would be impossible without an ultimate faith and hope and love. The latest witness I can cite to this great truth is the Australian Premier, who, speaking to the representatives of organised Labour in this country (on April 19, 1916),

who entertained him to dinner in the House of Commons, said that

“the driving force in the Australian Labour movements *has been spiritual in its nature* (the italics are mine). The enthusiasm of those who fought beneath its banner in the early days was, in the truest sense, religious. These men saw with kindling eyes and fast-beating hearts the topmost towers of a new and better world, and devoted their lives to preaching the glad tidings and pointing the way. This is the spirit that has animated the Australian Labour Movement. Lacking it, we should have perished.”

This is the spirit, verified in the present writer's case, by thirty years' acquaintance with and study of the movement in Great Britain, which has sanctified the endeavour and stimulated the zeal of the labour prophets of our generation. Underneath all the strife and organisation, underneath all the turmoil and turbulence of politics, has been this imperishable belief in justice and truth, and in the majesty of right—the very attributes of God.

Yet, for all this, the organised Church in England has seemed, until now, incapable of discerning the profound spiritual elements in the people's appeal and faith. This obscuration, this failure of prophetic insight, has been the bane of modern Churchmanship,¹ and in its practical issues has done much to alienate the common people, who, we read, heard Christ gladly.

¹ Note, this criticism is true also of other religious bodies; but the writers in this volume are concerned primarily with the Church of England.

By reason of this apostasy, the Church has ceased to be connected in the minds of the people with liberty, equality, and fraternity. It is, in their eyes, broadly considered (1) a class monopoly of the well-to-do, something which is, as a whole, alien from their aspirations, their hopes, their ideals and their movements ; and (2) a guardian of formal religion merely, a religion divorced from the dreadful realities of life.

When therefore we ask : How is the Church to become really the Church of the people ? we must answer : By the abolition of all monopoly in the Church which is destructive of the fellowship of Christ ; *i.e.*, by the reassertion of the Church as the communion or fellowship divine.

This principle will lead us into revolutionary paths, from which we must not shrink. We cannot reform ecclesiastical evils and abolish ecclesiastical monopolies, apart from the reformation of similar evils in society. Monopoly in the Church will yield only in the measure in which it yields in civic life. By this it is not meant that we are to wait until national life is socialised, for the Church should lead, not follow. What is meant is that Churchmen must fix their minds upon and attack fundamental wrongs, and not dissipate energy upon things comparatively trifling, such as hymns, services, hours of service, ceremonial, and so forth. Our great campaign must be against that class-spirit of monopoly both in the Church and in Society which contravenes the principles of fellowship, equality and liberty, to which we are committed by holy baptism and communion.

In the Apostolic Church the tendency undoubtedly

was to break down barriers of class and caste, and to create a new positive fellowship among men. Professor Harnack has shown how this fellowship would act ; how it made the rich poorer and the poor richer, undermining the stereotyped social conditions of the Roman Empire, and gradually creating a new social *régime*. This it was which aroused the suspicions of the Roman authorities, and led to the beginnings of the persecutions of Christians.

Still more obvious was the working of this principle of equality and fraternity in the Apostles' own day. In the first enthusiasm of her virgin faith the bride of Christ attempted a sudden realisation of the kingdom of God. By an impulse, inevitably springing from their conviction of the brotherhood of man in Christ, the disciples attempted a community of life and of goods. " And they that believed were together, and had all things common ; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all according as any man had need."

This attempt at a sudden realisation of brotherhood, as we are so often reminded, completely failed. But the significance lies, not in the failure, but in the *attempt*. It failed indeed ; but yet the attempt justified itself. It was as the flash of light which shows the traveller in the darkness of night the city to which he journeys. It failed, because God does not will that any circle of His children—even His chosen Israel—shall perfect their destiny here, *apart from the common lot of mankind* ; it failed because it is not His will that any single group shall achieve a perfect fellowship, inward and outward, secure from physical distress and

ill, while around them the mass of mankind is in tragedy and want. Guarded from any such selfish isolation, the Church must turn its face towards the suffering around it, and hasten by every means in its power the coming of the Kingdom of God in earth for all men.

In the meanwhile, pending the reformation of Society, the Church of Christ must make every effort to realise fellowship in those spheres in which it has independent power. Its sons and daughters should strain after fellowship in its worship and organisations. Its officers should be drawn, in a true vocation, from every class of society ; and they should be trained out of their natural class prejudice, until they are able without bias to minister to all men. In the Church's synods and council, all the members of the one body, apart from class or rank or sex, should find their voice and influence.

V

It is a new spirit—a holy spirit—that we need ; a spirit of fellowship which will transform the class-spirit by the renewing of our minds. Bishops and priests and laity should strive to appreciate and absorb the genius of the common people. This would issue in vast reforms. Church buildings would be free and open ; exclusive seatings would be abolished ; services would be arranged for the people and not merely for the refined and educated classes. Matins would cease to be the chief service on the Lord's Day. The Eucharist would take its place as the main vehicle of worship.

The common people do not understand Matins, and never did. Isolated instances may be found where a vigorous and compelling ministry has successfully charmed the people into saying incomprehensible psalms and in listening to our interminable lectionary and sermons. But Matins regarded as the basis of worship must be termed a failure, and must yield place to the great democratic service of the Eucharist. The hour may be this or that ; the ceremonial may be simple or elaborate ; the outward circumstance may vary largely ; but the Eucharist alone provides those sacramental tokens, that dramatic sequence and climax, which the common people can comprehend and appreciate, and by which alone they will be gathered together one day for a common worship.

All these things would be of enormous help in transforming the Church, but it remains that, to-day as in olden times, the fellowship of the Church cannot be fully realised apart from the transformation of Society at large. We cannot achieve a religious fellowship while in our secular life we are all caught in the tangle of competition and monopoly. In vain shall we strive for a democratic "ecclesia" purged from the taint of the money-power, while in the world we assent to the disinheritance of the people from land, from capital, from university, from culture and education. If we assent to the industrial and civic bondage of the poor, inevitably that same bondage will corrupt, as it does now, the Church of Christ. Think, for instance, of the earthly servitude of the agricultural labourer,¹ who

¹ The various agricultural strikes upon the eve of the war give point to this argument.

through all the ages has tilled the ground and harvested its golden fruit, only to find that after twenty centuries of Christendom his last state is worse than the first. Upon him the immemorial burden of life presses with remorseless weight. His struggle for existence increases as civilisation develops. Never was his lot harsher than in the epoch which saw the whole world exploited by the industrial developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rowntree's investigations, published in 1913 under the title "How the Labourer Lives," disclose a most tragic condition of unremitting toil, hardship, poverty and injustice. For the rural labourer political and economic liberty exist chiefly in name. In reality he remains what he always was—a slave. This statement is always challenged, but it remains strictly and genuinely true ; and upon any careful and intimate inquiry can be broadly sustained.

To such, what does the Church stand for ? What is connoted to this labourer's mind by its venerable rites, its ancient buildings, its formal and conventional sequence of services, its established and endowed institution of vicar, rector or "curate" ? If we also allow for the experience of him and of his forbears, of its attitude of prejudice, during two centuries, towards the social movements for political and civic liberation, we must reach the sad and lamentable conclusion that, as indeed is the fact, the Church as a corporate institution is alien from the struggle and tragedy of his life.

VI

If then we would make the Church really the Church of the people, we must vitalise our religion, or, rather, seek the vitalising power of the Holy Spirit. The Church must be seen and known to exist, not for small purposes of its own, but for the redemption of the world. This we believe. Yet, before the war, we were spending our energies in petty disputes and shallow controversies, which to the simple-minded tended to obscure our fundamental mission, which is—to *save* ; to save not merely souls but men, not merely some men but all men. The masses of the people will respond to-day as of old to a Church which brings glad tidings, a Church which, putting aside all trifling with life, faces the two elemental needs of man's nature, his need for a better life, and his need for daily bread ; a Church which seeks before fame and learning, culture or power, the kingdom of God and His justice, the doing of His Will, as in heaven so in earth.

It is not by shorter sermons, nor brighter hymns, nor simpler services, nor by either splendid or simple ceremonial, still less by patronage of the people, that the Church will become the Church of the people ; but *only by the Cross* ; only, that is, by identification of the Body of Christ with the tragedy and suffering, with the hope and faith of the people's life. From the midst of wars and rumours of wars ; from out of their agonising struggle for existence, their sharp and bitter contest with a cruel world, and their resentment of the

tyranny of gold, the poor see the Church as something afar off, away from their reach and ken, and as living a life sheltered and secluded from the dust and the din of their own mortal combat with poverty and want. As Dickens wrote of "Poor Joe"—outcast and forlorn, in his misery up-gazing from Blackfriars bridge at the golden cross upon the summit of St. Paul's—"So golden, so high up, so far out of his reach ; and in his eyes the crowning confusion of the great confused city"—so the masses of the people in our great cities and rural districts regard the Church of to-day, as something far above them and their tragedies, outside their ken and experience—"So golden, so high up, so far out of their reach !"

The faith of Christ, and the Church which brings it, can be real to their souls only when they are identified, as the Lord Himself was, with their actual life, their sufferings, their struggles, their hopes, and fears, and their aspirations after good. The Church will be really the Church of the people when, frowning upon the insolence of the world, and the exclusiveness of privilege and monopoly, it avows again the cause of the poor to be the cause of Christ. When the people hear the Church proclaiming, "I will up, because of the deep sighing of the poor," then will they return with singing unto Zion ; and many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down in the kingdom of God ; and the last shall be first and the first last—for all shall be One in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Will the Church in its "Mission of Repentance and Hope," proclaimed in this year of grace, face the facts

of its own fault, its own most grievous fault, in regard to the labouring poor and the great movements which embody and articulate their hope and aspirations ? Will it awake out of sleep and arise from the dead, and gaze with a new understanding and sympathy towards the passionate and pathetic struggle of the poor for their inheritance in the earth ? Will it ask, first, not what it can teach the poor, but what God is proclaiming to His Church by the poor, and by their witness against our sins ? Will it, ere it be too late, recognise, in its own exclusiveness and class or ecclesiastical prejudice, the Pharisaic blindness which, long ago, brought its Lord to Calvary ? Will it first seek the cleansing of its own lips that it may preach to the nation of repentance and hope ?

Such are some of the questions to which an answer is now urgently required, if the organised Church of England is ever to be really the Church of the People.

PART V

THE TEST OF LIVING EXPERIENCE

BY THE REV. C. H. S. MATTHEWS

Vicar of St. Peter's in Thanet

*Author of "The Faith of an Average Man," "A Parson in the
Australian Bush," &c.*

CHAPTER XV

ANOTHER PERSONAL EXPLANATION

THE Chapters that follow have been written at many times,¹ for the most part in the midst of the multifarious duties of a Parish Priest, whose work is by no means limited to his own parish. They will be found to set forth the point of view of one who, if he must accept any label at all—and frankly he does not believe in ecclesiastical labels—would as soon be called a modernist as anything. “By a modernist,” says Father Tyrrell, “I mean a Churchman, of any sort, who believes in the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truth of his religion and the essential truth of modernity.” It is in this broad and general sense that the writer acknowledges himself a modernist. Like all modernists, the writer believes that he is truer than the traditionalists to the spirit of the past, just because he refuses to interpret the past, as the traditionalists interpret it, according to the letter. “The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.”

¹ Some have been published, in substance, in *The Commonwealth* and *The Challenge*, and are republished here by the courtesy of the respective Editors of these papers.

But the writer is a modernist—as these chapters will show—not in the main because, sitting in his study, he has found intellectual problems insoluble except in the light of modernist theories. He does not profess to be a scholar, and he hopes, therefore, to escape the taunt so commonly hurled at the heads of young Oxford dons—that his writing is merely “academic” and out of touch with life as the parish priest knows it. He is a modernist because he finds in his parish, in his pastoral dealing with souls, that traditionalism is quite powerless to help those who most need help. It is the actual experience of finding on the one hand, outside the organised Church, so many of the most faithful, the most courageous, the most thoughtful and the most humble—in a word the most Christlike—souls he has ever known and on the other hand the no less certain discovery that the most faithful souls inside the Church—Christlike, too, in their devotion, humility, and self-sacrifice—are living and worshipping in a real independence of what they have been taught to believe the indispensable intellectual foundation of Church-life, which has driven him, after much kicking against the pricks, to the modernist faith. It is this experience which has given him inevitably a sense of the futility of traditionalist fears: the faithlessness of traditionalist conservatism and obscurantism. In a word it is vital experience which has made him a modernist. And, again, it is this experience which has made him feel that a National Mission is doomed to failure, if it means a Mission of a traditionalist Church to a Nation which is really too faithful to pretend that it can accept any longer the Creeds traditionally interpreted. There

is a grave danger lest the Church, fearing to face the ultimate issues, may go forth to the world beating a drum with zeal and enthusiasm : inviting people to repentance and hope, with, all the time, its skeletons insecurely locked up in cupboards rendered ruinous by the ravages of time.

It is no use asking people to surrender themselves to the acceptance of a life based—or supposed by them to be based—on an outworn metaphysic.

I find myself in complete agreement with a well-known Chaplain at the front who writes, in a private letter, “ If people want religiousness apart from truth the Church of England is in no position to compete with Roman Catholicism.” That indeed is one of the plain lessons of the hour. The success of the Roman system, as far as it succeeds, seems to be based upon a really wonderful practical understanding of the psychology of the worshipper. For those who are content to regard the intellect as in some sort a gift from the devil : who for this reason (or because they are merely intellectually slothful) never ask for an intellectually satisfying religion, there never can be any religion so entirely satisfactory as Romanism, with its sense of largeness and mystery and certainty.

But, on the other hand, there are more and more people who really believe that their intellectual powers were given them by God, to be used fearlessly to their utmost capacity in His service. They may gladly worship with the Roman Catholic, but they can never make the submission which Rome demands. They cannot cease to demand—those who agree with the present writer believe that in the Church

of England they have found—a form of religion which can satisfy their whole nature, intellectual, no less than emotional and purposive. For these, the writer believes, the Church of England is the true spiritual home, because it offers them the *truth*, no less than the *way* and the *life*.

But, if this be so, it is essential that the Church itself should see afresh its true vocation and its superb opportunity.

The Church of England is failing—every thoughtful person sees this—because it is divided against itself : because its own sons and especially its officials have no faith in that which is its true glory—its Christlike comprehensiveness and inclusiveness and freedom and adaptability. The whole purpose of the following chapters is to plead these things—with a passionate conviction born of an experience which has perhaps been wider than that of many parish priests.

Indeed it is only the privilege of a wide and ever-widening experience of life which gives the writer any title to plead his cause at all. And just for this reason he sets down in rough outline how experience has come to him that his readers may know the exact grounds upon which his pleas are based ; how they have sprung out of life rather than out of books—that the chapters which follow may make their claim to consideration on this, rather than on any more pretentious ground.

Briefly then, the writer, after arriving at the sixth form of a large Northern Grammar School along traditional Classical lines, began to specialise in Science, in which he subsequently took his degree at Cam-

bridge—his subjects for the Tripos being Zoology, Geology, and Chemistry. To this scientific training he feels that he owes one mental habit, which others have attained, he believes, by the devoted study of Plato, that great lover of truth—the habit, that is, of refusing to square or explain away experience to fit a scheme ; but rather of testing and retesting every theory in the light of growing experience. Then, after a year as a science master at a small school, he went to a theological college, to which he owes chiefly four things—first, an intense belief in a sacramental interpretation of the Universe ; secondly, a belief that Christianity calls for the consecration of every power to the glory of God and the good of man ; thirdly, a belief in the validity of the modern critical methods as applied to the Scriptures ; fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, the discovery of what Christian fellowship can mean and ought to mean : that fellowship which has all that the deepest and fullest comradeship with other men can give, transfigured by the light of a common ideal, by the complete dedication of each separate individual within a definite body to a glorious cause, which each and all feel to be worth living for, and, if need be, worth dying for.

There followed some three years in the crowded streets of a dock parish in Southampton, where sacramental Christian Socialism came to seem the solution of the most urgent practical problems which the Church had to face. Then came a period of five years in the Bush of Australia, with its unique opportunity for coming to see and love humanity stripped of convention and so to learn fundamental human

needs.¹ To this succeeded a year spent in dealing with the problems of educated men in the West End of London, when one came also to know and love and revere some of the eager truth-seeking, deeply religious and for the most part intensely modern, younger dons of Oxford and Cambridge. Five years followed in a country parish of Sussex with its wonderful opportunity of studying the faith of the charcoal burner, and its opportunities also, as theological adviser to a well-known publisher and as one with leisure to go about lecturing and preaching, of meeting cultured men and women of many types.

And, finally, two crowded, busy years as vicar of a large parish, as chaplain to first one and then another yeomanry regiment, and also to two hospitals for wounded soldiers, have brought many new experiences and taught many fresh lessons. Indeed he would be a singularly dull and impervious being who could go through such a varied experience without learning lessons worth handing on—without indeed coming to convictions so passionately believed in and held that he must proclaim them to any who will give him a hearing. There, then, is the writer's apologia. He has written his share of this book because he believes he has something to say—not indeed for scholars, but for the thoughtful, truth-seeking, Christ-loving priests and laymen, of whom there are so many to-day, who are willing to listen to any man who,

¹ Those who desire to read the record of the writer's Australian experiences and the life of one of his Bush friends are referred to "A Parson in the Australian Bush" and "Bill: a Bushman." (Arnold, 3s. 6d. each.)

because he loves his fellow-man and longs to serve him in any way that he can, speaks what he really passionately believes.

It may well seem to some who read what follows that the writer dwells too exclusively on the darker side of Church life; that he is blind to much that is good. He would therefore beg his critics, in advance, not to press the argument from silence in this particular instance. The call of the moment is a call to repentance. In order to repent it is essential that we should focus our attention not upon what is admirable in our Church life but upon what is wrong. And indeed it is the very sense of how much there is that is good, the eager longing on the part of so many clergy and laity for guidance as to where the source of our acknowledged weakness as a Church is to be found, the deep desire on the part of many to make even radical changes, if such changes are proved to be necessary, which encouraged the writer to speak his own mind quite freely and invite his fellow-contributors in this volume to do the same.

Surely if ever there was a moment for perfectly frank speaking it is now, and whether his judgments prove to be true or untrue, acceptable or unacceptable, the present writer has ample reason for knowing that he is voicing, in the chapters which follow, beliefs which are very widely held among the laity, but which they often refrain from saying aloud to the Bishops and clergy generally, for fear of shocking them.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EFFECT OF THE WAR ON RELIGION

"As dying, and behold we live."—2 Cor. vi. 9.

It is not easy to form a just estimate of the effect which the war is having on religion as a whole. There is much to be said for Professor Gilbert Murray's view that the war is tending "to discourage the higher kind of religion and immensely strengthen the lower."¹ Reports, from chaplains at the front and from officers who care about religion, vary greatly. Occasionally one hears that "everyone prays in the trenches," others say they see no sign of religion in the trenches at all. For my part I confess that I can see few signs that the war has drawn the great body of our soldiers into closer communion with the life of the Church. It is very rarely that you find a soldier who has a good word to say for compulsory church parades. One soldier in a Yorkshire regiment, from India, thus expressed a general feeling: "Church parades war enoof to kill religion. Tha 'as to polish all tha bootons and get the'sen oop to the nines.

¹ Lecture on "Herd Instinct and the War." (The International Crisis in its Ethical and Psychological Aspects. Milford.)

Then they marches yer oop and dahn, oop and dahn, in t'e broiling sun—that's for t' benefit of t' public—then tha goos to t' church parade. Tha knaws joost what tha's boun' to get. T' same old sermon ivery time, on the fall of Rome. What made Rome fall? 'Wine and wimmen,' ánd we was all goin' t' same roäd. We reckoned t' chaplain was gooin' along wi' us anny roäd. We 'ad that for fooer years—and we war joost fed up wi' it." Nor are they any keener in war time than in peace. "If you could hear the language of the men about the church parades," writes a man from my parish in the R.A.M.C., "you would wonder what earthly good they can do." Another says, "We have our drum-head service, attended by three regiments. As only the front platoons in each regiment can hear anything that goes on, the service is a perfect farce."¹ "Army religion," writes a mother, "is certainly

¹ I can vouch for the following typical story of Army religion which I had from the Major who figures in it. Two men, A. and B., failed to put in an appearance at church parade. They appeared in due course before the Major. The following dialogue ensued:—Major: "Why were you absent from church parade to-day?" A.: "I'm a Jew, sir." Major: "A Jew! You are entered 'C. of E.', how do you account for that?" A.: "Well, sir, when I joined they said 'C. of E., I suppose,' so I thought I had to be C. of E., but I'm really a Jew, sir." Major: "Oh, very well, but you still had no business to be absent without leave. Three days' C.B." A.: saluted and withdrew, and evidently told his chum, B., that the Jew trick was no good. So when B.'s interview took place the dialogue took the following form:—Major: "Why were you absent from church parade to-day?" B.: "Please, sir, I'm an Atheist." Major: "Atheist! Then why are you down 'C. of E.'?" B.: "Please, sir, I thought I had to put down some religion, and I thought I might as well say 'C. of E.' as anything," Major: "Very good, but you've no right to absent yourself from parade without leave. Three days' C.B." B. salutes and retires. Then the major turned to the

the limit. X. (her son) writes that church parades arouse all his worst passions. He says that he is a Christian but certainly not a Churchman." An earnest and capable chaplain to a cavalry brigade told me that he never got more than five or six communicants at his celebrations in camp, though he had tried every hour which seemed to be at all possible. Yet there is a considerable amount to be said on the other side. If there is no real revival of Church life among our soldiers, there is undoubtedly a good deal of personal religion. I confess that I have great doubts whether the kind of prayer which results from being under shell-fire is a sign of any real religious awakening. Mr. Burroughs quotes an officer to the effect that "for many of the men God is, so far, little more than an extra rifle." On the other hand, there is a good deal of testimony to the sometimes newly awakened interest of our men in religion. Witness the following letter, which I received, from a private in a County Regiment, not long ago: "Dear Sir,—There is one thing here I have noticed where the war is a good thing. Men who would do anything to get away from church parade

sergeant-major who was present at the interview and said, "As it is always a job to find men for the Sunday fatigues, you had better put these two men on, as they don't want to come to church parade." The next Sunday but one both men were at church parade again. The Major sent for them afterwards. "Well, A.," said he, "I thought you were a Jew! How was it that you came to church parade this morning?" A.: "Please, sir, I've been thinking things over since I saw you last, sir, and I've found I'm C. of E. after all." Major: "And you, B.—what about you?" B.: "Please, sir, I've thought over it, sir, too, sir, and I believe I'm C. of E. too, sir!" Major: "Very good—but remember you've got to stick to it now for a year. The Army regulations only allow you to change your religion once a year, and don't you forget it!"

are now the ones who want to go, or if they did not go they made trouble about it, and they was not like that before the war broke out, so it has done good in this case." And I felt there was real religious feeling in the Loyal North Lancashire man in one of my hospitals with whom I had the following dialogue: "T' Chaplain-General sent us a prayer." "Yes," I said, "I know that he did." "Aye," answered my friend, "*an I've nivver 'ad no pay sin'!*" "Do you put that down to having had the prayer sent you?" "Well, I doän't knaw about yon. But anny roäd, I stook t' prayer in ma prayer-book, along with ma wife's photo, and every night in t' trenches I took out ma prayer-book and 'ad a look at ma wife's photo and said ma prayer"; and then, as though it were an after-thought, he added, "*and of course I'd nivver 'ad no pay afore, either!*" Again to speak of one's personal experience among the wounded, I find that the men are with very few exceptions immensely interested in religion. They all roll up to the voluntary services in hospital; they listen with the closest attention to every word the preacher says; they will sometimes discuss with him afterwards questions raised in his addresses. And they love singing hymns, though quite often they candidly admit that the words mean nothing to them. When asked to choose them for their services, they choose them for the tunes without any thought of the words.

It is only fair to add that among men of all classes and all denominations one finds an intense admiration for and devotion to certain chaplains whom they have met at the front or at home. It is a purely personal feeling—the feeling of a man for a man he admires.

They care, these men, no more than the average Bushman in Australia, or for that matter the average working man in England, whether the parson is High, Low, or Broad. Any man who talks straight without a parsonic voice, above all any man with a cheery spirit and a sense of humour, is absolutely certain to get a splendid hearing and to exercise a good deal of personal influence.

Moreover experience proves that if the faith of the Church is put in a straight and unecclesiastical manner, if the Chaplain remembers that he is a man who has at least as much to learn as he has to teach, if he talks quite simply of the temptations and difficulties of life as he has tried to face them, and often failed to triumph over them, the men will listen eagerly to anything he has to say. They will come to Confirmation as to the most natural thing in the world, they will make their Confession without so much as realising that they are doing it.

On the day that I write this final paragraph I am having the great happiness of presenting fourteen wounded men—such splendid fellows—for Confirmation. But I know that I should not have persuaded them to come had I taught them the kind of conventional, external, semi-magical sacramentalism of the little Catholic books, or the pious sentimentalism so often regarded as its only alternative.

THE CHURCH AT HOME

Turning from the trenches, the hospitals, and the camps to the average parish at home, what does one

find? Is the Church exercising any great power? I greatly doubt it. I believe that many people are longing for a real religion, but that they hardly know what they want. At home, as abroad, a man with a message gets a hearing, but I doubt whether any of the forms of religion to which we are most accustomed are really meeting the needs of the people. Of course numbers of people are finding in the Eucharist exactly the spiritual strength that meets their deepest needs, but, alas! we have so quarrelled about the meaning of the service and made of it such a symbol of division, associating it in so many cases with doctrines which men feel they cannot understand, or accept in so far as they do understand them, that many are kept away who would otherwise be coming to this service.

And if the services of the Church fail to attract the masses of the people, the attitude of the majority of Church people towards their social aspirations and the problems which face them in their daily life too often simply exasperates the labouring classes.

Yet even Lord Northcliffe sees that the nation does want religion, and tries to meet the need by presenting Mr. Horatio Bottomley, of all people, as the greatest religious teacher since the days of the Apostles!

AFTER THE WAR

And there can be little doubt that whenever the war ends, unless Prussianism emerges triumphant (which Heaven forbid!), there will be an immense reaction in favour of some more enlightened form of International Socialism than has yet arisen. This will be due partly

to the feeling of the working classes that they have been sold by the old authorities, and even more largely to the fact that large numbers of men, munition workers as well as soldiers, will return to ordinary civil employment to find that whereas during the war their families were living in comparative affluence, they are now asked to live on the quite inadequate wages of pre-war times. Many wounded soldiers to whom I have spoken have endorsed this view. And this is bound to affect the Church. The admiration of the men for many, but by no means all, of their chaplains (of which I spoke above) will not affect their attitude towards the Church. If they find a parson they admire they too often think of him as a good fellow *in spite of* being a parson : an exception which proves the rule. They see that the Church as a whole stands for keeping things as they are, or even for remodelling them after a mediæval pattern : that the clergy as a whole are opposed to all changes within and without the Church : that the ecclesiastical parties are unable to agree amongst themselves about any single thing, except the refusal to allow any changes to be made in the formularies of the Church and the refusal to countenance independence of mind in any individual priest. They see, too, that whereas they themselves have adopted a fundamentally forward-looking attitude of mind (the attitude of faith in every age), the clergy as a whole look backwards rather than forwards ; and, when they think of the future, dream only of the re-creation of some idealised golden age of the past.

In all this the intelligent working men are undoubtedly right, and, this being so, can we hope that

the Church of England will survive as a real power in the land when the war is over? Personally I do not believe it, unless an almost incredible change of mind (*μετάνοια*) takes place among our clergy. If it does not take place, the days of the Church of England, though not those of the Christian Church, are assuredly numbered. Our real trouble seems to be that we have lost almost all sense of the Gospel values and have substituted for them a whole scheme of erroneous ecclesiastical values. These have become so conventional that we simply take them for granted, and never take time to test them by the standards of the Gospel. As a matter of fact, when we examine the criticism of the Church's methods current among men of good will outside the Church, we find that nearly always, often quite unconsciously, these men are judging the Church by a standard of values which is really fundamentally that of the Gospels. It is this fact which makes men say, too often, that a real repentance, as distinguished from a merely verbal repentance, on the part of the Church, is beyond the bounds of hope. But not even the regeneration of the Church of England is impossible if we have the faith to seek and to expect great things of God. "With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CHURCH ?

IF what I have said is true, the summons of our ecclesiastical leaders to a National Mission of Repentance and Hope makes it quite imperative for those of us who care about the welfare of the Church and the nation to "sit down and take counsel" lest we embark light-heartedly upon an expedition which we have not sufficient spiritual force to carry through.

One thing is absolutely clear. Unless the Church makes a strenuous effort in the next few months to set her own house in order and repent of her own sins, she may advertise and preach a mission, she may hire halls and quite possibly fill them, but at the end of it all the mass of the nation will be moved, if at all, to nothing more satisfactory than amused contempt.

The one fatal thing (as I heard the Editor of *The Challenge* say the other day) would be merely to go to the nation saying very loudly the things which it has heard us say (though not so loudly) many times before.

We clergy have got to learn that it is not the very slightest use for us to denounce what we are pleased to call "national sins," by which we mean those sins to which we do not happen to be addicted ourselves—*e.g.*,

drunkenness, sexual immorality and gambling—unless we are prepared to go very much deeper into the causes of things than we have hitherto shown any inclination to do. Possibly, if we honestly sought the true cause of drunkenness, for instance, we might find that it lay in the fact that the Church provides, on the one hand, no outlet for the overflowing vitality of live men, and, on the other, no remedy for the exploitation of the labour of the poor. If the Church fulfilled her mission properly, those who are now “drunk with wine” would be “filled with the spirit” instead. It is useless to denounce sins of which we ourselves are in a large measure the indirect cause. It is a plain fact that there is frequently more brotherliness in our public houses to-day than there is in the Church of England. Let us face that fact. In the same way we have no right to denounce sexual “immorality” when, on the one hand, we have never had the courage to teach our Confirmation candidates the facts of life, and, on the other, have condoned all the sins of the Pharisees while we have hastened to throw stones at the woman taken in adultery.

While the Church is content to set before the nation an ideal largely negative—mere abstinence from such sins as I have mentioned—and positive only in the observance of such things as Churchgoing (“Sunday Observance”) and submission to trivial ecclesiastical rules: while the nation sees neither in the lives of the clergy nor in those of the so-called “faithful” anything approaching that astonishing “wholeness,” that overmastering sense of being in touch with reality which attracted the “common people” to our Master, we can have nothing to hope for from a mission to the nation

organised by the Church. If Church people were bigger people than they are ; if those who go to Church were obviously better than those who stay away—more charitable, more vital, fuller of that joy of life, which was characteristic of the early Christians ; if they were seen to be burning with enthusiasm for righteousness, for justice, for humanitarian causes, we should be welcoming converts by thousands instead of indecently rejoicing (as is too often the case) when we have beguiled into our own particular sectarian fold a proselyte, not from the outside world, but from some other sectarian fold, which in all probability is rejoicing simultaneously in having roped in one of our own “ backsliders.”

And that brings me back to another point which I mentioned in my last chapter and must touch on again. It is perfectly futile to imagine that the Church will get itself taken seriously by the nation unless it manages to get the sectarian spirit exorcised from within its borders by the Holy Spirit of God. The facts of the situation are so pitifully plain. Here is Father A., earnest, strenuous in his self-denying labours and very pungent in his denunciations of Archbishops and Protestants, filling his church with ease every Sunday. His congregation (which probably does not include one per cent. of his own parishioners) is composed of people who have this in common that they do, for various reasons, feel the need of public worship. They are people, for the most part, of a marked type—they like dignified ceremonial and careful ritual, they like order, they like to be told exactly what to accept (they would say “ believe”), they want

to know exactly where they are. Some of them, it is true, are there because they like the pungent sermons, though the ceremonial does not mean much to them. Some of them, on the other hand, are there because they like the mystery and dignity of the service, though their intellect revolts against the doctrine offered them ; some of them are there because they like the music. But the point is they are there and Father A., seeing them there, argues that if all churches were run on his lines all people who were not hopelessly at sea in religious matters would attend the Church's services : and " the good old (pre-Reformation) days " would return !

On the other hand, Mr. B., who has a large seaside parish, has choral Matins as his chief service. He has an excellent choir. He believes that " the Bible only " is the religion of the Protestant Reformed Church of England and he preaches the Word with intense earnestness and moral force. He has a horror of anything Popish . . . and his church is filled to overflowing, very largely with visitors from other parishes. They are there—these churchgoers—for various reasons, some of them because they like to " sit under " a man who is eloquent and obviously sincere, some of them because they have a genuine love (chiefly built up out of past associations) for Matins, in spite of its imperfections. Most of them would be hopelessly lost at a High Mass. Ceremonial bothers them. They do not understand it ; and they argue that the Master laid no stress on it at all. They have many of them a very deep and genuine personal love for their Master.

And one day Father A. on his holiday strolls into

Mr. B.'s church for Matins. It is years since he went to choral Matins. He expects to be, and is, inexpressibly bored. . . . Therefore, he argues, all these people thronging the church must be inexpressibly bored too. . . . He gazes round upon them and sees at once that they *are* bored. . . . No wonder, poor people ! What they really want is High Mass. . . . His people (*laus Deo*) are not bored. . . .¹

Now Mr. B. does not, probably, ever go near Father A.'s church, but he reads lurid accounts of what goes on there and is filled with horror, and then Father A. in public pours scorn on Mr. B. and all his works, and Mr. B. retaliates by vehement denunciation of Father A. and all his. . . . And the public wonders what it is all about ! But though they are thus at enmity between themselves there comes a day when (like Herod and Pilate) Father A. and Mr. B. "are made friends together." . . . That day is the day in which men speak of reforming our services and altering our cherished attitude towards the mass of the people. Both Father A. and Mr. B. know quite well that the vast majority of the men of the nation hardly ever enter a church door . . . they have three reasons to give for this fact, and on two of these they agree together, viz.,

¹ There is a widespread belief among the more Catholic-minded of the clergy that the substitution of a sung Eucharist for Matins, in all our churches, as the mid-morning service would result in a large increase in church attendance throughout the country. I wish I could agree with them, for I myself infinitely prefer a sung Eucharist to sung Matins. But, unfortunately, one knows of many parishes where the making of this change has emptied the church instead of filling it, and one knows many earnest and devout Communicants who love their Communion Service in the early morning, but prefer Matins to a sung Eucharist at 11 a.m.

(1) that the vast majority of the men of the nation are hopelessly irreligious. "This people which knoweth not the law is cursed"; (2) that the spirit of criticism is of the devil and must be resisted at all costs. . . . If God gave men reason it was that they might honour Him by refusing to use it. Each, as has been said, has a third reason which, on this day at all events, he keeps secret in the deep of his heart. . . . Each is sure that if the other would abandon his evil ways and adopt his own chosen line all would be well. . . . And behind Father A. and Mr. B. is the whole bench of Bishops thanking God for the comprehensiveness of a Church which includes both Father A. and Mr. B. . . . and somehow leaves the vast mass of the people of the country, including thousands of men and women full of zeal for truth, for righteousness, and for charity, outside its doors!

It is the *unreality* of it all which strikes the mere layman so forcibly, and it is for reality (that is, for God) that consciously or unconsciously his soul is hungering. Everywhere, even in their gross sins, men *are* seeking for reality. . . . It is our unreality which is keeping them away from church . . . the unreality of our services, the unreality of our sermons, the unreality of the things we quarrel about (*e.g.*, Kikuyu questions).

Let us humbly thank God that it is so.

It is deplorable that the Church is out of touch with the nation. It would be really more deplorable if the nation were altogether satisfied with the Church as the Church is to-day. . . . Then, indeed, it would be vain to speak of "repentance": then, indeed, there would be no "hope."

CHAPTER XVIII

WHERE ARE OUR SONS OF THUNDER ?

“SOMEHOW,” says Dr. Holland, “a strange shadow of dullness has fallen over the clergy. We are flattened out, I do not quite know why. There is so much in us that is stupid and depressing. We do not look as if we were alive. We wear an air of curious commonness. We are disappointing, cheap, inadequate. . . . Evidently we have been missing our Sons of Thunder. We have not drawn them in.” Every word of it is true. And it is also true, as the same writer points out, that it is just these impetuous, courageous, warm-hearted Sons of Thunder whom our Lord loved and called to discipleship . . . just these who heard and obeyed the call at all costs.

Why then are we missing them ? Surely the answer is not far to seek. It is because we are not true to our Master. He could and did draw them. The Church cannot, because it has lost His Spirit ; because it has substituted for His method a method almost totally opposed to His.

Dr. Holland looks wistfully to the hosts of those who, in innumerable cases at the sacrifice of every worldly

ambition, have offered their very lives, in response to the call of their country. What about them, when the war is over and they are set free from a task which many of them hate? "They will be looking about for some channel down which to discharge the energy of their sacrificial ardour. Can we draw them to the Church? Can we use them? Can we give them their free and glad release?"¹

Such is Dr. Holland's question. What about the answer? First we may be absolutely certain that the Church will have an opportunity and a task demanding all the faith, the courage, the spirit of glad adventure and the readiness for complete self-sacrifice, which are the marks of the Sons of Thunder, to-day, as in every age.

A trumpet-call will sound through the length and breadth of the land, summoning all who are willing to hear and obey to the task of building a new and better civilisation upon the ruins of the old. It will be a task which will indeed require faith and courage, for just as Germany in the last century surrendered herself to the spirit of Napoleon, against whom she waged successful war, so in England to-day there are already many whose implacable hatred of Germany is a clear proof that they have surrendered to the very spirit against which we claim to have been fighting. There will be many who will deliberately set themselves to perpetuate the very temper out of which war inevitably springs, and many others who, for motives of private gain, will foster in every possible way this evil and unchristian spirit in the land.

¹ "The War and the Kingdom of God." Edited by G. K. A. Bell. (Longmans. Pp. 165 ff.)

Our hope of escape from the fatal triumph of these dangerous leaders—these blind leaders of the blind—lies partly in the fundamental rightness of vision of our democracy, partly in the faithfulness with which a regenerate Church will bear witness to the spirit and power of Christ. A Church awakened from torpor and knowing the things which belong to her peace ; a Church filled with a fiery enthusiasm for the cause of righteousness, setting out on a true spiritual crusade to the music of Blake's verse, now, alas ! almost too hackneyed to quote—

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall the sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

—will have no lack of eager volunteers—true Sons of Thunder—pressing into her ranks *if she will accept them*.

But the real question is, Will the Church accept the Sons of Thunder or will she bar them out by asking of them that which she has no right to demand ?

Will she, as so often in the past, make the word of God of none effect through her traditions ? It is not too much to assert that that is exactly what she is doing now.

Let us go back to the Gospels and see how our Lord got his Sons of Thunder and compare His method with that of the modern Church.

Our Lord, as we see Him in the Gospels, went about looking for men whom He could train to be His disciples. He found some among those who had been deeply stirred by the message of John the Baptist, in others his deep insight detected capacities for loyal

friendship and service ; and He simply offered Himself to these men as their Master. He called them and they left all and followed Him, inspired by His presence, His message, His personality. He did not ask of them any kind of intellectual or dogmatic test. He gave them no scheme to which they must needs conform. He appealed for personal loyalty to the greatest of all causes and He got what he appealed for. Compare with that method our present-day methods of getting clergy. If a man burning with enthusiasm for the cause of the Kingdom of Heaven, loving righteousness, justice, and truth with all his heart, eager to spend and be spent in furthering the ideals of Christ, offers himself for the Church's service, what does he find ? He finds, between him and his object, a mass of intellectual tests framed in the far-off past when men lived in another intellectual world from that in which we live to-day. Creeds, for the proper interpretation of which a man needs intricate knowledge, philosophical, historical and critical, must be accepted. He may have the zeal and spiritual power of St. John, but, unless he will profess his belief in that of which St. John apparently knew nothing, the Church will have none of him. He must spend long and weary hours learning to dodge the plain meaning of the Thirty-nine Articles, unless he is prepared to accept what to any thinking man must needs be wholly unacceptable just because it has no kind of contact with life as he knows it, but only with controversies with which he will never have to deal. Moreover, he will be supplied with a code of intellectual shibboleths by which he will have to test the orthodoxy of any man who

desires, under his influence, to enter the Christian fellowship. It will be made plain to him that the terms upon which men are to be allowed to profess and call themselves Christians or Churchmen to-day are quite other than, and indeed in spirit quite opposed to, those upon which the first Christians entered into fellowship with their Master and with one another. There is no question that in innumerable cases it is our traditional intellectual tests which are keeping away our Sons of Thunder. They cannot believe that God means them to assent to that which seems to them irrelevant and unnecessary, or that He desires them to affirm anything on what seems to them insufficient evidence.

Let us take, for instance, the case of a man absolutely fired by zeal for our Lord and a longing to work for and to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, who feels that he simply cannot assert that the doctrine of the Virgin birth of our Lord is to be accepted literally, as an historical fact, in the physical sphere. He will be met with all the familiar arguments: he will be told that science acknowledges cases of parthenogenesis, an argument which, if it were valid, would remove exactly that miraculous element which orthodoxy is concerned to maintain. He will be told that the miraculous birth was necessary to break the entail of inherited sin. And he will remember that the Roman Church has found it necessary, in order to complete this argument, to add to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. He will be told that you cannot believe in the incarnation if you believe that Jesus had

a human father ; an argument which he knows to be untrue, because he himself has no difficulty in believing the Scriptural statement that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. He will be confidently assured that the dogma safeguards the divine Sonship—whereas he soon discovers that it was actually inserted in the Creed because it was supposed to safeguard the *humanity*, not the divinity, of our Lord . . . and so on and so forth. At the end of all the argument he will almost certainly find himself in the position that he cannot deny that the thing may have happened ; but with the feeling that the evidence that it did happen is altogether insufficient to enable him honestly to assert that it did. It is vain for him to say that he has the faith of St. John and of St. Peter, that he has the same passionate belief in Jesus Christ, and that it is just this belief which means to him that he must be loyal to the truth as he sees it—he is none the less inexorably barred from Ordination by a man-made barrier, or, if haply some Bishop, more liberal-minded than the rest, allows him to enter the ranks of the ministry on a distinct understanding that he interprets the Creed in a sense other than that of the traditionally orthodox school, he finds himself soon an object of suspicion, dislike and attack from his fellows in the ministry, men less able, perhaps, and, some of them, fundamentally less honest, than himself.

It is quite true that in these days he will find a growing number of clergy who will say, in the comparative privacy of a purely clerical discussion, that they are quite prepared to admit that if it were proved beyond possibility of doubt that the Virgin birth did not take

place, it would make no kind of difference to their own personal faith. Yet somehow these very men neither tell this to their own congregations nor see that if it be true (as it undoubtedly is) their belief in the Virgin birth, since by their own confession it has no kind of influence on their conduct, is exactly on a par with that kind of belief in God which St. James condemns. It is that "faith apart from works" which is barren. He will find, also, that the Bench of Bishops professes itself satisfied with exactly this barren faith in the quasi-historical statements in the Creed, since the utmost they feel themselves able to insist on (when they pass resolutions in answer to urgent clerical requests that they should condemn modernism root and branch) is that no man in Holy Orders should be allowed to go so far as to deny that these things did happen. He is not called upon now to say: "I am sure that, in the traditional sense, this is true"; he is only called upon to refrain from saying: "I am sure that, in the traditional sense, this is untrue."¹

It is small wonder that this typically episcopal posi-

¹ The Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury passed the following Resolution in 1914 :—

"1. We call attention to the resolution which was passed in this House on May 10th, 1905, as follows :—

"That this House is resolved to maintain unimpaired the Catholic Faith in the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation as contained in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and in the *Quicunque Vult*, and regards the Faith there presented, both in statements of doctrine and in statements of fact, as the necessary basis on which the teaching of the Church reposes.'

"We further desire to direct attention afresh to the following resolution which was unanimously agreed to by the Bishops of the Anglican Communion attending the Lambeth Conference of 1908 :—

tion is wholly unsatisfactory to the enthusiasts on either side in the Modernist controversy. On the one hand, the Bishop of Oxford, being apparently profoundly convinced that the Lux Mundi school settled once for all the exact limits of legitimate liberalism in the Anglican Church, would purge the Church of every taint of modernism. On the other hand, the keenest intellects of the day see quite clearly that even the kind of neutralised traditionalism of the Episcopal Bench is more than sufficient to choke off from the ministry of the Church the great majority of the Sons of Thunder.

But, it will be said, you must have some tests for candidates for the ministry. It is quite true that our Lord called to Him whom He would, that He set before

“ ‘The Conference, in view of tendencies widely shown in the writings of the present day, hereby places on record its conviction that the historical facts stated in the Creeds are an essential part of the Faith of the Church.’ ”

“ 2. These resolutions we desire solemnly to reaffirm, and in accordance therewith we express our deliberate judgment that the denial of any of the historical facts stated in the Creeds goes beyond the limits of legitimate interpretation, and gravely imperils that sincerity of profession which is plainly incumbent on the ministers of Word and Sacrament. At the same time, recognising that our generation is called to face new problems raised by historical criticism, we are anxious not to lay unnecessary burdens upon consciences, nor unduly to limit freedom of thought and inquiry whether among clergy or among laity. We desire, therefore, to lay stress on the need of considerateness in dealing with that which is tentative and provisional in the thought and work of earnest and reverent students.”

The Bishops, in view of the National Mission, are telling us repeatedly that they are going to lead the Church in the matter of repentance. One cannot but hope that the Episcopal “change of mind” will mean that the Upper House of Convocation will in the future recoil with horror from the attempt to settle matters of grave debate among scholars by the method of passing such resolutions as these.

men no kind of intellectual test at the outset of their career of discipleship, that He even sent them forth on a mission without having asked them to pass any such test ; but after all it was only upon the rock of a very definite confession of faith that He declared Himself able to build His Church. Moreover, in the very earliest recorded instance of admission to the Apostolic Ministry after the Resurrection an express series of tests was laid down. He who was so to be admitted must have been of the fellowship of those who had personal knowledge of the Master and be able out of that personal knowledge to witness to His resurrection. And all this is incontrovertibly true, but the real point to be noted is that nothing is asked, by Christ or by His Apostles, of anyone called to the ministry of the Church, but such things as he is in a position to verify and assent to out of his own personal experience. St. Peter's great confession was the outcome of a conviction born of experience that in Jesus of Nazareth the deepest hopes of the Jewish people were indeed fulfilled ; that in Him the living God was indeed made manifest. So, too, the fact of the resurrection was verifiable from the first, and is verifiable to-day in the personal experience of believing Christians. Indeed, unless we " know Him and the power of His resurrection " all our orthodoxy, all our willingness to assent to Creeds and accept traditions, is utterly vain.

It is quite otherwise with many of the things to which assent is commonly asked nowadays of candidates for the ministry. Doubtless it is true that there is a Virgin birth, that second birth from above of which our Lord spoke to Nicodemus, which is a verifiable fact of

experience. Doubtless, too, the complete humanity and perfect divinity of our Master—the spiritual truths which were supposed in different ages to be guaranteed by the physical miracle of the Virgin birth—are verifiable in experience too. But experience cannot verify the miraculous birth as a fact in the historical series, nor can the experience which can verify the truth of the Christ alive out of death verify the fact of the empty tomb. These things, regarded as happening in the historical series of events, are matters upon which scientific historians have their claim to be heard. For the decision of the questions of controversy at issue there is required a depth of scientific, philosophical, and historical knowledge to which few of our Sons of Thunder will lay claim. And while they are aware of the profound differences of opinion among scholars, and have a shrewd suspicion that the weight of the learning of to-day is against the literal interpretation of these clauses of the Creed, humility—that most Christian of all the virtues—will restrain them from asserting that they have come to a final decision on the points at issue.

And here, no doubt, a question may fairly be asked of the present writer as to his own personal position. “You,” it will be said, “are yourself a priest of the Church; how (in view of what you yourself have said) did you come to that position; how, at any rate, do you justify your continuance in the ministry, when the views you are urging are admittedly not those of the Church as a whole?” To this I can only answer: First, that, as I have stated in another essay¹ in this volume, in the overwhelming experience of the con-

¹ See pages 210 ff.

version which came to me at my theological college, in the deep joy of the fellowship with those who like myself were newly won enthusiasts for the Kingdom, I was in no mood for discrimination or intellectual debate. Rather I accepted, practically without criticism, whatever my teachers of those days put before me. They had given me faith and I was willing to accept anything they told me was necessary to its maintenance. It is subsequent contact with life and thought which has led me to see so clearly the distinctions then hidden from eyes dazzled by the glory of light which had shone upon them from heaven.

As to my present position, I still believe that I hold all that the Creed really stands for. I still repeat it *ex animo*, though in a very different sense from that which the Bishop of Oxford maintains as the only tenable sense. But I am a man under authority, and if authority finally declares that there is no room for me, holding the views here maintained, in the ministry of the Church of England, I hope I shall have the courage and the faith to bow to it. Meanwhile I can only say that, side by side with that painful development of critical open-mindedness, which I have come to believe to be really essential in one who tries humbly to follow in the steps of Him who is the Way and the Truth, in spite of all one's faithlessness, there has come an ever-deepening experience of the Sacramental presence and a growing power to help other perplexed and anxious souls, which is sufficient witness that the fearless following of the truth only brings with it a fuller sharing of life.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ONLY TEST

“THE things of the Spirit of God,” says St. Paul, “are spiritually discerned.”¹ Why, then, do we persist in applying to them tests which are not spiritual? “By their fruits ye shall know them,”² said Christ, but if the fruits are not grown in the particular portion of God’s garden which we have marked off for ourselves we proceed to deny that they are fruits at all: or, when that is impossible, we seek to account for their presence, outside our orthodox plot, by the theory that God’s grace has somehow, unaccountably, run wild.

The Church is the abode of the Spirit, whose fruit is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Surely, then, where these things are, there is the Church, and he who manifests this fruit in his life is of the Church without any kind of doubt. Yet how slow we are to recognise this truth! “John said unto Him, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name: and we forbade Him because he followed not us,” and though Jesus said,

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

² Matt. vii. 20.

“ Forbid him not,” we, in our misplaced zeal and too narrow orthodoxy, have followed John, who had not yet learnt the limitless love and toleration of his Master, rather than the Master Himself.

Yet what a profound and glorious widening of the horizon comes to him who becomes converted from the point of view of John to that of the Master, and learns to discern by the Spirit the things of the Spirit. He finds that as a matter of fact he can trust the guidance of the Spirit implicitly, and trusting Him, he gains a new and incredibly deeper experience of the reality of the Communion of Saints. He ceases, inevitably, to attempt to define the limits of the true Church. He cannot but see the grotesqueness of every attempt to externalise the Church’s boundaries.

Special rites of consecration, special sacramental ordinances, may indeed mark out their recipient as being the holder of special privileges of service . . . but “ as the wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit ” ! As the love of God is a circle “ which hath its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere,” so is it with the true Church of Christ. The Pope of Rome may make submission to his authority an essential of membership in the true Church, but the Spirit ignores his claims and the Church is found to be in fact where the Pope will not see it. It is curious how timid men are in acknowledging the presence and power of the Spirit, yet surely only those who have a secret fear that their own position is untenable could be so anxious to deny the right of Christian fellowship to others.

No doubt there is often a certain right feeling behind

that fear of latitudinarianism, which is so prevalent among the so-called extremists of either wing in the Church. Too often, it must be admitted, latitudinarianism in religion has gone with a real indifference to righteousness, and a kind of superior contempt for the ignorant zeal of others.

In truth a lukewarm latitudinarianism is more to be dreaded in the Church than anything else. Better to be zealous, men feel and feel rightly, in a narrow cause, than half-hearted in a wider one! There has been a lack of human feeling about certain schools of latitudinarianism in the past which goes far to account for, if not to excuse, the distrust which they have inspired in more ardent souls. Such latitudinarianism refuses indeed to define the circumference of the Church, but then, too obviously, it has no centre from which it would be possible to define it.

But the inclusive Catholicism for which I would here plead, with really passionate earnestness, is something very different from this Laodicean indifference. A continually growing experience has proved to me, beyond all possibility of doubt, that there is a deep kinship between Spirit-possessed souls which transcends and makes light of all external barriers.

Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.¹

As I think back over my own spiritual history memory reminds me of man after man of amazingly

¹ Myers' "St. Paul."

different types of character, of widely separated stations in life, some of high, others of meagre intellectual attainment, clergymen and laymen, Churchmen and Nonconformists, men and women, in whom I perceive beneath the infinite diversity of their gifts and their opinions the presence and the power of the one Spirit dividing to every one severally as He willed.

It was a brilliant scientist, who had himself passed through the deep waters of doubt and had come from agnosticism to a vital faith, a Presbyterian, who yet said to me on one occasion that he believed that the future of religion in England lay with the Church of England, who saved me from utter unbelief in my undergraduate days. It was under the influence of a band of devoted High Churchmen that I came for the first time to a vital belief. Side by side with them in memory I see the venerable form of an Evangelical dignitary, who, though over eighty years of age, preached a sermon on the glory of the Bible, which (though it is now eighteen years since I heard it) I shall never forget. It seems to me, indeed, as I write, as though it was but yesterday that I sat spellbound for the half-hour which seemed all too short while that sermon was preached. I can see the aged preacher—scholar and saint of God—and almost hear the tones of restrained passion with which (without, if I remember rightly, manuscript or note of any kind) he poured forth what the Bible had meant to him and might mean to his hearers. . . .

And then there passes through my mind a long procession of those Spirit-possessed souls whom I have come across in my ministry—a girl, dying of phthisis,

gradually wasting away and yet with an indomitable faith and courage that spoke unmistakably of the Spirit's sustaining presence: an ex-policeman, dying too of the same disease, lying for many months in a tiny room in a slum street—a living witness to the truth of St. Paul's words, "though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." Both of these were Anglicans, though the second (whose radiant deathbed I can never forget) had once been a Roman Catholic. But the point is that not only in these and hundreds of others, Anglicans like them, have I discerned the presence of the Spirit beyond possibility of mistake, but equally beyond possibility have I discerned His presence in others whom I could name—many of whom are my friends to this day—who belong severally to such various religious organisations as the Roman Catholic Church—orthodox and modernist—the Society of Friends, the Congregationalists, the Salvation Army, and one or two who would not claim to belong to any Church but are, or were when I knew them, giving themselves passionately to the cause of Christ's poor in the Labour movement.

It is true, of course, that the doctrinal differences between myself and these others have been in many cases great, but the sense of underlying spiritual kinship has none the less been unmistakable, so that it has come to seem merely fatuous, if not indeed wicked, in the face of this spiritual unity, to attempt to erect ecclesiastical barriers which would bar any one of them from the fellowship of the Church.

But I know, of course, when I say this, that I shall

be met with that objection that I have reverted to the now generally abandoned theory of a merely "invisible" Church, which it will be said can never fulfil the object which our Lord prayed for, unity—"that the world may believe." The true unity, it is argued, and argued rightly, must be visible or the world will never see it, and, until it sees it, it obviously cannot be converted.

To this I can only reply, first, that we have in the Roman Catholic Church a realised ideal of external unity which, as a matter of actual fact, has not brought the world to faith and shows no signs at all of ever doing so ; and, secondly, that the world does respond, even now, to any exhibition of genuine brotherly feeling between Christians of different denominations. It may be true, I think it is true, that mere undenominationalism, a religion of the least common denominator, is absolutely powerless to convince or convert the world ; but a brotherly interdenominationalism, a frank and friendly acknowledgment of common aims and ideals, combined with an equally frank and equally friendly statement of points of difference, no less certainly impresses the outside world and makes men feel that the spirit of Christ, thus outwardly and visibly manifested, is really powerful in our midst to-day. Experience proves that it is possible to maintain unwavering faith in the Sacramental Presence in the Service of the Altar, the reality of the Confirmation gift and the authoritative validity of Holy Orders, without going on to deny (as so many do in mistaken loyalty to Catholic Faith and Practice) the validity of those experiences which are, to the men and women

of every denomination to whom they come, the sure and unmistakable witness of the Spirit's presence in their lives. It is, I am profoundly convinced, the simple truth that when the Churches shall have faith enough to trust the intuitions of the Spirit through and through, the world will soon be won, as it has never hitherto been won, to Christ.

CHAPTER XX

THE POOR MAN'S GOD

IN a vigorous sentence in his book "The Gospel and Human Needs," Dr. Figgis accuses the modernists, against whom his argument is directed, of "trusting to the God of philosophy to come down from the machine and save from the wrecks of ecclesiasticism just enough to suit the men of parts and polish, while throwing to the wolves the poor man's God, Who wrought wonders and rose from the tomb."

Like so many of the arguments of this most intellectual of apologists it is a telling argument, until it is examined in the light of human experience.

To bring it to this test is the purpose of the present chapter. "The Poor Man's God"—is He really, as Dr. Figgis assumes, the God of the orthodox theologians? And is there really any danger of the poor man being robbed of his God by the theologians of another colour? The present writer does not believe it for an instant. Theologians may and often do break one another's idols: the poor man's God cannot be broken; except by ill-will. And the reason is not far to seek. The God of whom Dr. Figgis is thinking is not the

poor man's God at all. He is the God of the extremely intellectual theologians—from St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas down to Dr. Figgis himself, who has been offered to the poor man, for his acceptance, by his “spiritual pastors and masters.” And the poor man has accepted just as much of the theologians' God—and, thanks be to God, it has been a great deal—as has squared with the God of his own experience: just as much and no more, in so far, that is, as he has remained the poor man, whose humanity as such is his highest possession, in whom life comes very easily first and thought very easily second. The real poor man has a lot to teach the theologians if they only knew it.

But my appeal is to facts. Let me give some of them.

I knew an old woman once in Australia. She had been brought up a Roman Catholic and she faithfully attended the services of her Church, which she loved. But the Roman priest only visited once a month the township in which she lived, and on the other Sundays Mrs. Moriarty attended in turn the services held by the Anglican priest—the writer of this chapter to wit—the Presbyterian minister and the Methodist, who divided the remaining Sundays in the month between them. And Mrs. Moriarty regarded all their ministrations impartially, approving more or less of them all, except when an excess of Protestant zeal led to denunciations of the Church of her primary allegiance, when she shook her head and said, “Shure, the poor man doesn't know what he's talking about—and how should he? But why can't he be leavin' the poor ‘Carth'lics’ alone?”

I well remember meeting this good soul one day in the main street of the township. "Good afternoon to you," was her greeting, flung at me across the width of the street. "I'm just as good as your Riv'rence to-day." "Sure and I hope you are a great deal better than that," was my laughing reply. "I'm just after coming from me 'duties,'" came back the answer, explanatory of her first remark. "Ah," said I, "I'm very glad to hear it." "And what do you think the Father asked me?" "I'm sure I can't guess, Mrs. Moriarty." "He asked me if I'd been up the hill lately." ("Up the hill," I may explain, referred to the position of the Anglican church.) "Well, I hope you told him the truth," said I. "Indeed and I did," came back the prompt rejoinder, "and what's more, I told him I should go again many a time, should it please God to spare me. And I said to him 't was only just a lot of tommy-rot between you priests and parsons which was keepin' the Churches apart: for all the difference between you, if only you knew it, is no more than a thin sheet of paper." Then I remembered how the first time I met that charming Irishman, Father O'Connor, I had told him that I knew one member of his flock, Mrs. Moriarty; and he had answered, "Ah, Mrs. Moriarty, sure she's no more than an old shandy-gaff, she's every bit as much yours as she is mine." There's my first fact, surely relevant to the matter in hand.¹

¹ I am more and more sure that the intolerance fostered by ecclesiastics—the professional religious class, Catholic or Protestant—and ecclesiastics are equally intolerant on either side—will not be able indefinitely to hinder that unity which is already

Now for my second. There lives in a certain Sussex parish a labouring man, who since his conversion, some years ago, has lived a life the like of which, in the utter completeness of its consecration, I think I never came across before. He would tell you to whom, under God, he owed his conversion, but indeed and in truth I know that it is not "flesh and blood which hath revealed" unto him the knowledge of the living Christ, but the "Father which is in Heaven." Every day that man goes forth to his work at dawn, but long before dawn he is up at his prayers. He never misses a Celebration of Holy Communion, when his work allows him to be present. He, like most agricultural labourers, is allowed one day's holiday in each year, and that day he spends in Retreat. He carries with him to his work every day his Bible or a copy of the "Imitation of Christ," which he reads in his dinner hour. He has to bear his Cross too, as you may imagine. His mates

becoming a reality among unecclesiastical individuals in all the Churches. Large numbers of Belgian Roman Catholics have discovered the Church of England since the war began, and have liked what they have found as well as that which they have known of old . . . and the subservience of the Vatican to Germany and Austria has tended, there can be little doubt, to make Roman Catholics, both in France and Belgium, more Catholic and less Roman than they were before the war.

Moreover, there is certainly a growing spirit of toleration among the Roman Catholic laity in our over-seas Empire. Here, for instance, is a quotation from a letter which came to the present writer, quite recently, from an Irish Roman Catholic farmer in Queensland: "What though we sail in different ships, we are all steering for the same port, and unless we mutiny on the way I believe we will all be allowed to land." His son, in the Australian Light Horse, is full of profound admiration for the Anglican chaplain attached to his brigade, and told me that he always attended his services.

have put their heads together, day after day, and come to him with hard questions about his religion, and scoffed and gibed at his slow and stumbling answers. But never once have they succeeded in drawing from him a bitter or impatient word ; never once have they shaken his serene faith in the God Who has indeed “worked wonders” in his own life. Many of the hardest questions he has written down on a bit of paper and brought to me, and there in my study I have sat, filled with a thrilling sense of the presence of the living Spirit, as in his slow-spoken Sussex speech he has tried to tell me of these debates of the fields. He tells me too, with the utmost simplicity, of the wonderful experiences which his faith has brought him. For he does have truly wonderful experiences, this saint of the twentieth century, genuine visions, though he never uses that word himself to describe them. “Things I sims to see some one time,” is his own phrase—which have come to him while he has been at his work, often puzzling him at the time, though a meaning comes to him afterwards in his mind, as he ponders over them. “Lars Friday,” he says, “we was beatin’ down Fordhurst way, and dinner-time I was handin’ round the shackles¹ to the other chaps, and sudd’nly there come over me a wonderful happy feelin’. ’T simmed ’s if I saw a beautiful bright light all about me. I was thinkin’ about the Sacrament. Do you think ’t is wrong to think about the Sacrament such times ? ’T sims ’s if I can’t help it. . . .” There is no shadow of spiritual pride or self-consciousness in it all. He

¹ A local name—at least I suppose so, for I never heard it elsewhere—for a kind of Irish stew.

does not apparently look for or expect these things, nor does he talk about them to anyone but me. They seem to him just the natural result of Sacrament and prayer. I think he comes nearer to the fulfilment of the Apostolic precept "Pray without ceasing" than any man I have ever met. He prays while he is beating. He prays while he is manure-spreading. He prays in the harvest fields. I doubt if there is a man in the parish he has not prayed for by name at some time or another. And his work does not suffer. On the contrary, he works now with a thoroughness and conscientiousness which have made him a better workman since his conversion than before. And—I want to emphasise this—the men he works with are coming to look upon him with a kind of awe. There is not one of them who would not name him without a moment's hesitation if you asked him to name a really religious man. I don't say that they don't tease him still. They do. But somehow the bitterness seems to be going out of the teasing. They have tried him and found him steadfast, and their power of moral judgment is unerring, in the long run. They do recognise a good man at last, and do homage to his goodness, in their hearts, and in word too, when they speak from their hearts, which is not often.

Now that the theologians, old or new, should rob such a man of his God, is to my mind simply inconceivable. They might puzzle him, as I myself have puzzled him before now. But his faith is rooted far beyond their reach. And his faith is only the common faith of the vast majority of my poor folk, though lived out, no doubt, on a level beyond the present

achievement of the majority. It is a faith which is rooted in good will. It believes in the good will of God and it blossoms into a large good will towards all men and a profound love towards other men of good will, to whatever religious body they may belong. I have never heard my friend (who himself came to confession after his conversion, communicates fasting and never eats meat on Friday) say one word against Chapel religion. His one idea is that every man, Church or Chapel, should be true to the best he knows. "We'd all oughter pray more," he says, "'t would make a wonderful difference if we was all to pray. 'Tis wonderful what a difference it has made to me. I don't seem to look at people in the same way's I'd used to, before I changed."¹

I do not doubt that if, for example, I asked the Rev. J. M. Thompson (who, it seems, embodies for Dr. Figgis the very spirit of Anti-Christ) to preach to my people one Sunday, and Dr. Figgis to occupy the pulpit on the following Sunday, these poor folk would be puzzled. The theologians of the fields would come with hard questions to my friend in the weeks that followed. But his faith, and the faith of those other poor folk, would remain unshaken. If doubts and difficulties clouded it for a moment, it would rise all the serener from its temporary hour of darkness.

"These preachers are too clever for me," I can fancy

¹ This chapter was written some years ago. George is now a soldier and writes to me constantly. He is as faithful as ever and as full of zeal. He is older than most men in his battalion and is known among them, he tells me, as "Dad," and indeed I gather that he fathers some of the younger lads in a way that gives point to the nickname.

George saying. "I can't understand what they want to be quarrelling with one another for; 't sims to me we'd all oughter pray more and God would bless us all."

"This is all very well," I can hear the theologians say, "but this is only theory, not fact. You have not had these opposite views preached to your people, and if you did you would find it would upset them very much." To which I make answer: No. It is not all theory; I have told my village people that miracles are in question, because I believe that one ought not to try to hide the simple truth about what is going on in the world of thought from the poor people whom we have to guide and guard—if they need our guarding, and in some ways they do—and I have puzzled them at the time a good deal. But they are far less easily puzzled now than of old, I think, and I know of no single case where the poor man's faith in the poor man's God has been destroyed, or even endangered, by the truth fearlessly and faithfully disclosed. The real fault of the theologians (I am more and more firmly convinced of this) is that they do not really trust the poor man enough, and it is just this which differentiates them from their Master.

The poor man, who is no theologian, does really trust in a God who loves him, who has redeemed him, and who is the power of life within him, and when you think that out you will see that the poor man holds the orthodox faith in the Holy Trinity—in his own undogmatic fashion.

And for myself I side with the modernists against Dr. Figgis partly for this very reason, that I believe the

poor man has the root of the matter in him, and that the modernists seem to me to have greater faith than the traditionalists in the poor man. The modernists are not the least afraid that they or anybody else, who himself believes in the living God, can rob the poor man of his God at all. And it seems to me that I can hear the Poor Man of Nazareth speaking through the lips and lives of my own dear poor men, and saying, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

CHAPTER XXI

THE FAITH OF THE CHARCOAL BURNER

IN the last chapter I attempted to defend the modernists from the charge of robbing the poor man of his God. It is commonly urged against the leaders of modernism that they are out of touch with the common folk, living, as they do for the most part, in the Academic World. Hence this appeal from their judgments to the supposed mind of the poor.

Now my only reason for intervening in the matter is this, that as a simple parish priest I have an obvious opportunity of getting to know something of the mind of the poor, an opportunity which I am at least anxious to use to the full.

It does not follow, of course, that I have used my opportunities as I might have done. One knows, only too well, how possible it is to live for years in daily contact with other men without ever gaining insight into their minds at all. One knows how the "man on the spot" is often the least successful interpreter of the local mind. Such interpretation is much more a matter of insight, intuition if you will, than anything else, and insight or intuition is a gift which not all possess, or cultivate even if they possess it.

I suppose the only way of discovering whether one has this gift in any degree is by the experience of other men's response to one's advances. If men come to treat one naturally as a brother man, to speak simply of their own difficulties and perplexities, to give one their confidence, and so on, one is encouraged to think that it is not altogether presumptuous to set down one's tentative conclusions as to their outlook upon religion and life. No doubt it is in some ways harder for a priest than for a layman to discover the true mind of other men, and especially of the poor man. One has to remember and take into account the fact, too often forgotten by the clergy, that there are large numbers of men who, for various reasons, some good and some bad, never say what they really think to "the gentry," and very many more who can hardly be induced to reveal their true mind to a clergyman. Many men, among rich and poor alike, take it for granted that the clerical mind is so severely orthodox that it would only be shocked by a revelation of what the layman really thinks. Moreover many consider it "bad form" to criticise a man's sermons; and does not the parson speaking from the pulpit expect you to take your religion from him, and rather resent it if you presume to differ from his point of view ?

But if I have learnt one lesson as the years of my ministry have gone on it is this, that frankness begets frankness. The more the priest takes his parishioners into his confidence, the more the parishioners will take him into theirs.

It is quite true that as he sits and reads "Foundations" or "The Mystic Way" in his study the priest

is facing problems far ahead of those which are troubling his simple folk, and therefore there is no necessity for him to form hasty conclusions on difficult questions, or to make *ex cathedra* pronouncements upon them from the pulpit to an unprepared congregation. But if he is honest he surely cannot go preaching traditionalism in exactly the same way as it was preached twenty years ago. And this fact brings him face to face with a great dilemma. How much or how little is he to tell his people? How can he best prepare them to meet the difficulties which will assuredly filter down to them through the medium of the papers and the talk of the public-house? Here he has to make his own difficult decision, upon which the fate of his own soul, and therefore in some measure that of his people's souls, depends.

The average priest probably feels that, in matters of grave debate among scholars, as earnest as himself in their desire to teach the truth, it would be a real sin against humility for him to take sides hastily. He has not the scholarship, the philosophical training, and so on, to fit him to decide one way or another upon disputed questions. What is he to do—for his people's sake? It is simply in the hope that the line which I, as one such average priest, have been led to take may help some of those for whom the *intransigent* attitude of some of our orthodox apologists is simply impossible, that I venture to put it forward with a statement of the results which have followed from it, in so far as I have been able to observe them, in the very real hope that it may meet with the most candid criticism from those who think it wrong.

And as a great deal of searching of heart has been going on, among clergy and laity too, in view of certain recent books, I will go to the burning topic of miracles for my illustration. When I have occasion to preach, say, upon the miracle of the cursing of the fig tree, I begin by saying, quite frankly, something to this effect : “ I think you ought to know that great discussion is going on at the present time in regard to the whole question of miracles. Our forefathers used to believe that every word of the Bible was, as it were, written with the finger of God. They therefore concluded that every single incident recorded in the New Testament occurred exactly as it is written down. Now, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, of whom you remember that it was said that He should ‘ guide us into all truth,’ we have come to see that this old view was mistaken. The Bible itself teaches us that it is the Spirit—not the letter through which that Spirit is expressed—which matters. Scholars and learned men are spending laborious days investigating the question of what exactly lies behind the Gospel records. Many matters seem to be much clearer now than they were a few years ago. Learned people seem to me to be far more ready now to believe in our Lord’s powers of healing the sick than they were twenty years ago. Other matters are still in dispute, and I am not scholar enough to pretend to be able to settle questions upon which these men, who are far more learned than myself, and quite as much in earnest, are disagreed. I think that we must be content to keep an open mind and leave a great deal to the future to decide. Meanwhile, I myself am quite sure on this point, and it is to this

that I would direct your attention, viz., that these stories enshrine for us simple folk the most profound and vital spiritual truths, and, after all, it has always been for the sake of these truths that men have valued them. From this point of view it does not very much matter whether or not our Lord cursed a certain fig tree in Palestine nineteen centuries ago, so that it immediately began to wither away. It is possible to imagine that the story arose out of some parable in which He compared the Jewish nation to a fig tree, prolific in leaves but barren of fruit. It is the more likely since St. Luke, who makes no mention of the incident recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark, gives us a parable concerning a fig tree, of which the spiritual point is really the same, a parable which is not recorded by the other Evangelists. But in any case the lesson for us is the same. We are all, whether nations or individuals, fig trees in the vineyard of God. Does He, when He comes looking for fruit, find 'nothing but leaves' ? " and so forth.

Now the thing that we are concerned with in this chapter is the actual results of taking this kind of line in the pulpit, and my own experience has been that three results have followed :—

(1) I do not deny for one moment that some of my people were at first profoundly puzzled. I am told that there has been an immense increase of religious discussion in my parish, not only among church-goers, but among non-church-goers. And I am assured that people listen more attentively to sermons than of old. I freely acknowledge that the kind of genial critic who says, "They tell me that the parson does not believe in the Bible," is not unknown. The strenuous, but

somewhat stupid, gentleman whose Protestantism is nourished upon the publications of Mr. Kensit has accused me of "tearing the Bible to shreds." His daughter, who used to come to church in the morning and go to chapel in the evening, now goes to chapel twice every Sunday, though she gave as her reason for leaving the Church, not that I was a modernist, but that I was a Socialist.

(2) But my people began to bring me their own difficulties as I am sure they would never have done if I had not been frank with them, and incidentally they have shown me that, whatever may have been the case in the past, the supposed traditionalism of the charcoal burners simply does not exist now in one country village at all events. How should it, when Professor Schäfer's mechanistic theory of the origin of life and Sir Hiram Maxim's dogmatic denials are popularised in all the halfpenny papers ? The butcher's wife, for instance—a staunch Methodist by the way—said to me on one occasion, "Rector, I want to ask you something. . . . Am I meant to believe the religion of David ?" "What do you mean, Mrs. Jones ? What is it that is troubling you now ?" "Why, it's that hundred and ninth Psalm. . . . I can't believe that man was right to say all those things about his enemies, 'Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow . . . let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.' Surely we've moved on a lot since the days when that was written. Why, there is not a soul in this village now, however ignorant, who would think it right to wish such things for his enemies. It doesn't seem to me that it is like the religion of Jesus. . . . It seems to

me that I have got to choose between David and Him.¹ My Mary (her daughter, one of the most faithful of my congregation) tells me every Sunday the sermons you preach at church, and I knew I should not shock you by telling you my trouble about this. . . ." A very elementary difficulty hers, no doubt, but one which would have been carefully hidden from me, as I have reason to know, if I had been supposed to be a rigid traditionalist. Or again, another of my poor parishioners said to me the other day, "Do you really believe in this 'evolution,' Rector?" "Yes, I do." "Well, so do I, as far as I understand it, but I want to know: When did men first begin to have souls?"—a profound enough question, coming from one of those "simple villagers," whose faith we are supposed to guard from all questioning.

One more instance, in confirmation of this conclusion, I will add, from my experience in the school, where "out of the mouths of babes" one learns more than many books will teach. We were following (nominally, at any rate) the diocesan syllabus, and it was at the beginning of a new course of lessons on Genesis, that I asked my top class about Creation. . . . "Was the whole work of Creation finished in six days?" I never, if I can help it, take an answer from a boy or girl for which he or she cannot give a reason. I soon found that the class was divided over this question, into those who thought that the work of Creation was finished and those who thought that it

¹ A friend of mine tells me that a girl whom he was preparing for Confirmation, not long ago, said to him, "Has not God changed a great deal since the time of the Judges?"

was not. I made a representative of each school of thought stand up. "George, you say that the work of Creation was finished in six days. Give your reasons." "Please, sir, the Bible says so, and the Bible is the Word of God. . . ." "Now, Arthur, you say that it was not finished, give your reasons." "Please, sir, it can't have been finished." . . . "Why not?" "Please, sir, new things are made now. There were no aeroplanes in those days." (I may say that aeroplanes had passed over the village for the first time a few days before.) After some further discussion I divided the class again and found that the youthful protagonist of creative evolution had convinced the whole class. The answer which seemed to fit the facts had proved victorious over the answer which was really only that which I was supposed, as a clergyman, to expect. I could multiply instances of this kind almost indefinitely. To my mind there is nothing more significant than the profound change of outlook which has come over the children of our Elementary Schools even in the fifteen years during which I have had the privilege of teaching in them. This last instance has no direct connection with the pulpit, but it is surely relevant, since one's attitude in school, no less than one's attitude in the pulpit, is affected by the decision one is compelled to make on the questions at issue between modernists and traditionalists.

(3) Thirdly, and lastly, I want to urge again that I have never come across a case in which vital faith has been upset by candour. I have known people, but not poor people, take offence, but the ground of their offence has always been, not that their own faith

was endangered, but that the faith of someone else, usually "the poor man," was likely to be endangered. Meanwhile, among the things which really do upset faith, I should be inclined to put first the "stand-offishness," even, I am afraid, the bitterness and uncharitableness, of those who are apt to think of themselves as "the faithful." The attitude, half-fearful and half-contemptuous, too often characteristic of the traditionalists towards those that are without—this it is, above all else, which destroys the faith of the poor man in the God of tradition if not in the God of his own experience; this it is which makes him say over and over again, "I don't see that there is much in this church-going. The church-goers aren't any better than them as don't go, 's fur as I can see."

CHAPTER XXII

“ AN IRRUPTION OF INFLUENCES FROM THE SPIRIT-WORLD ”

“THE total massive impression of the New Testament narratives seems to me so strong and so wonderful that, unless I was hindered by irresistible prejudice, I should say that we have here to do with events in a high degree mysterious, with what has all the marks of an irruption of influences from the spirit-world into that of sense, producing, as might well be anticipated, amazing disturbances. For if there be a spirit-world behind this and it has relations with ours—if even what Mr. Thompson somewhat inconsistently admits be true, then that these results of such a unique fact should be strange, abnormal, miraculous, is only natural.”¹

Such a passage as this has one great merit. It sets one thinking furiously. It suggests such questions as the following : What is the total massive impression of the New Testament upon me ? Do I believe in a Spirit-world ? If so, on what grounds do I believe in it ? Has it “ any relations with ” me ? If so, what is the

¹ “ Civilisation at the Cross Roads,” page 243.

nature of those relations? Are they strange and amazing? Are they abnormal and miraculous? If so, in *what sense of the words* are they abnormal and miraculous?

For my part I should not hesitate to describe the total massive impression of the New Testament upon me now in the very words that Dr. Figgis uses. It is indeed "strong and wonderful." The events it describes are indeed "in a high degree mysterious"—and as for "amazing disturbances," the one incontestable fact of experience is that the New Testament "events" have turned the whole world upside down.

I believe all this now. There was a day when I took the New Testament for granted, and asked no questions about it, supposing that it was all literally true, because my "spiritual pastors and masters" apparently thought so. Anyway, they did not tell me if they did not think so. I believed in the God who had made the world, to whom I said my appointed prayers, to whom, sometimes, I prayed, in an agony of spirit—when, for instance, I found, as I often did, temptation overmastering, and again, when my little brother lay dying and I poured out my boyish soul to Him who had healed the sick in Palestine, and implored Him to do the same thing in the nineteenth century—and got no answer at all *then*. I supposed that this God could reveal Himself now, if He chose, in the same way as He had done in Bible times. But one thing was plain, He did not do so: no doubt for good reasons. The facts remained that my little brother died, and as it seemed to me, a great piece of my heart died with him, and was laid with his dear body in the

little grave to which, on Sunday afternoons, we used to pay our loving, remembering pilgrimages. And I struggled on against the temptations which were not taken away, in spite of all my prayers.

And then there came a day—how well I remember it !—when I discovered, from the lips of my closest friend of those days, a cleverer boy than myself, as we walked about the cricket field one Summer Sunday afternoon—that I must not take the New Testament as literally true. Scholars had decided, for instance, that what he (and I) thought the tenderest story in the New Testament—that of the woman taken in adultery—ought not to be in the Bible at all !

So came the beginning of a great and no doubt very commonplace disillusionment which, in my 'Varsity days—when I was reading science and Huxley's Essays, and so on—culminated in a kind of raw Agnosticism. Miracles don't happen, miracles never happened. The New Testament is not true. The Church is built up upon a huge illusion.

True, I went on occasionally conforming in religious observance, even from time to time, at lengthening intervals, going to Holy Communion, I can hardly say why, except that, I suppose, I did really, to some extent, distrust my own Agnosticism, and also that I shrank from inflicting upon my mother the pain which I knew a total defection on my part from Communion would have given her. How well I remember an Easter, when I was working at zoology at the old Noah's Ark at Cumbræ on the Clyde. I stayed away from Communion on Easter Day, for the first time since my confirmation, and all the following

week was haunted by the thought of my mother's grief if she came to know. And so, on the octave, I made my Communion, and was nearly "put off" for evermore by the Ritualism which I met there, in Millport, for the first time.

However, the fact remains, in no vital sense at all did I in those days believe that there was a "spirit-world behind this." And then, having naturally abandoned the idea of taking Holy Orders, I accepted the offer of a science mastership, and became responsible for influencing the lives of a herd of boys. I thought, great Heavens! that I could get along at this without religion. And of course I found that I could not. For some unearthly reason (how "unearthly" I did not in the least understand then) the more thoughtful of the little wretches chose to bring to me the very difficulties which had upset my own boyish faith. What on earth could I do to help them? Fortunately for me there was in the place a curate who was first and foremost a great, lovable man—playing football for his county and getting hold, in a truly marvellous way, of the young men and boys in the town where he worked.

Without asking me any questions about my dogmatic beliefs—very reprehensible of him, no doubt—this curate made me an officer in his Church Lads' Brigade, in spite of my genuine protestations that I was not in the least suited to the job. He did not want me to instruct the boys in theology, and I was quite willing to go to church, so what did that matter?

Well, I do not want to weary my readers with an autobiography, but the long and the short of it is that

through faith in this man I came to see that he had hold of something which I had not got. He was a bigger, better man than I was, and religion was somehow or other the most real thing in his life. Whether or no the Spirit-world had produced, by its past "irruptions," the exact "disturbances" with which it was credited in the New Testament, it was plainly producing "disturbances" in my restless and unsatisfied soul. So I was driven on from point to point, until I found myself at a theological college, not in any way pledged to subsequent ordination, but simply to honest search after the reality of which I had become dimly conscious.

And the theological college produced upon me the profoundest effect. Always, in a vague sort of way, I had wanted to live for others. Here I found men wholly consecrated to life of that kind. I took my crude difficulties to my principal and the college staff and met with a patient, sympathetic hearing, and was given answers to my hesitating questions, sincere and thoughtful and quite enough, at all events, to show me that if there were acknowledged difficulties in the way of belief, they were no greater than the difficulties in the way of unbelief. In short, I came to believe in the Spirit-world because I came to believe in these men.

And, again, this belief produced the profoundest disturbances in my life.

I, who had believed in nothing, became convinced not only that God had spoken in Jesus Christ, in the past, but that He was speaking to me through Him in the nineteenth century. That He was calling me to the Priesthood. That He had a work for me to do in the

world. Strange indeed and wonderful—miraculous—if you like to use the word, that the Spirit-world, in the existence of which I had not believed, should come thrusting itself into the centre of my own life, turning it upside down in this fashion.

What wonder that, in the face of miracles like these in my own life, I became not only ready but eager to accept the miracles of the New Testament. Did Jesus open the eyes of the blind? One thing I knew—with an amazing certainty—whereas I had been blind, now I saw.

Eighteen years have passed since that day, time for a good deal of reading, a good deal of thought, and a good deal of experience.

I look back at my old theological notebooks and, I confess, I am inclined to wonder that some of the answers to my difficulties satisfied me even in those days. Certainly they do not satisfy my maturer thought.

But the truth is, that in my own experience I had “passed from death unto life,” and I was not inclined to sit quietly down and criticise this splendid experience.

Yet criticism had to come. There is a passage in one of those old notebooks of mine copied from Newman: “Reason has a power of analysis and criticism in all opinions and conduct, and nothing is true or right but what may be justified, and, in a certain sense, proved by it; and unless the doctrines received by faith are approvable by reason they have no claim to be regarded as true.”

Criticism had to come, and it came, as it always comes, like a sharp sword.

For the spirit of criticism is the Spirit of inexorable truth, which—nay who—for we know who is the Truth—will not allow us to be content with a lie in the soul, a permitted confusion of essential and non-essential

There have been days, once or twice, in those eighteen years when I have sat or knelt with the tears streaming down my face, asking in the darkness, whether I should have to lay down my orders, give up the work which had become the deepest joy of my life, and begin life all over again.

And those dark days—thank God—have always been the gateways of new life, until they have come to be for me the deepest and most irrefutable witness of the presence and power of the living Spirit leading us all on, as we were told to expect He would, into all truth.

And now I begin to see Him everywhere. I sit in my study and read, and find Him speaking through my books. I go out into my parish and I know no humble cottage where He is not breaking through the material.

I visit the mother of a large family and find her careworn and work-weary, but grappling womanfully with a pile of stockings belonging to those boys and girls of hers to whom I have been giving religious instruction at my village school in the morning. She is spending and being spent in their dear service. And though she has eight of them to look after, and her husband earns 18s. a week, neither she nor he could spare one of them without heart-breaking sorrow.

There was a day when I should have noticed nothing

in that cottage but the poverty, the hideousness of the oleographs on the walls, the appalling clash of colours in the woollen antimacassar on yonder chair. Why is it that now, as I speak to that good soul, I hear a voice saying in my heart, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren ye have done it unto Me," and see the Christ in that mother giving Himself for the children He loves so dearly?

Do I need more miracles than this miracle of the love and self-sacrifice of the poor to prove the reality of the Spirit-world? Should I believe it any more if suddenly the holes in the piles of stockings mended themselves?

That would indeed be an "amazing disturbance"—and I should no doubt feel that the calculable world had been rudely disturbed. I should expect the same kind of "disturbance" to happen everywhere. Wherever an overworked mother needed rest I should expect to see it granted in such fashion as this.

But I do not think I should really believe in the love of God any more than I do at present, where I see it so manifestly revealed to faith.

And behold through the cottage door, a vision of a heated, cassocked figure hurrying towards me, his arms full of books of every kind, modern novels, restatements of belief, new theologies and old, to tell me, his eyes blazing with excitement, that if I tolerate such thoughts as these, I must go straight on to Pantheism!

Because I begin to see the world in God, and God in the world, I am on the slippery slope! I may be profoundly aware of the presence of evil; I may hate the selfishness and sin which I find so powerful in my own

life, and in the life of the world about me ; but if I am content to keep an open mind at the present moment in regard to difficult intellectual problems, which seem to me to require for their solution a knowledge of science, philosophy and psychology to which I can lay no claim, I must, forsooth, choose between a Pantheistic Nature-worship and the abandonment of any belief in a supernatural world !

Well—I do not believe it.

And the peasant woman darning her stockings does not believe it either. You ask her !

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CHURCH AND THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT

I

THE growing demand for reality in every department of life is indeed one of the most hopeful signs of the times. Everywhere men are growing sick of shams: whether it be in religion (where a sense of unreality has more to do with keeping our churches empty than we like to admit), or in politics, or in the general life of the community.

Everywhere men and women are growing less and less content with a life lived, as it were, upon the surface of things, a life built upon the sands of untested assumptions.

Old institutions and ancient usages alike are being tested in the fires of criticism. Mere age is no longer considered a guarantee of respectability and usefulness.

Every institution, and every custom, has to face sooner or later such questions as these: How did it come to be? What purpose does it subserve? Does it justify its existence? If not, how can we clear it out of the way?

And this critical inquiry, this demand for proved worth, for assured reality, is itself due to the gradual permeation through the whole structure of modern life of the scientific spirit.

For science can never be content with the surface-value of things ; it must for ever be getting a little nearer to the truth about them ; analysing them ; relating them one to another ; distinguishing facts from fancies ; substituting completer and more accurate for partial and less accurate description.

And so it is that the scientific mind, accustomed to work according to this method, brought face to face with this or that institution or custom, cannot possibly be content to take it as it finds it. It must begin at once to seek the reality behind the appearance, to analyse, criticise, classify, and so on. . . . So, for instance, when a scientific man goes to church, and is brought face to face with institutional religion, it is almost impossible that he should refrain from asking questions about it. . . . What does it all mean ? . . . What is its aim ? . . . How far is it a worthy one ? . . . How far is that aim being attained by these methods, or ever likely to be attained ?

II

And those who are Christians ought to rejoice in this. For are they not pledged to follow at all costs—even the cost of crucifixion—Him who said, “ I am the Truth ” ?

Do they not constantly profess their belief in the Holy Spirit of Whom it was promised that He should

“lead them into all Truth”? They are, therefore, committed by their Christian profession to belief in the truth, and nothing but the truth, and to progress in the discovery of truth.

For this reason, just because he is a trained seeker after truth, the man of science ought to find himself at home in the atmosphere of the Church. It is a pathetic mistake to imagine that devotion to scientific methods unfits a man to form a just judgment on religious questions. It is, indeed, true that in the last century a mistaken philosophy, supposed to be scientific, seemed to exclude human freedom, and so to cut the ground from underneath religion, but this philosophy was itself doomed from the beginning, as we, looking back, can see now quite plainly, because it was bound in its turn to stand the test of scientific criticism. It had to prove its validity by relation to the facts of experience.

But the fact remains that, with fewer and fewer exceptions, the men of science have not found themselves at home in the Church, even when, as often happens, they have refused to abandon religion; and in proportion as the scientific spirit has permeated all classes of society, church-going has steadily declined. Why is this? It is often said by the apologists of the Church that it is not science but a materialistic philosophy, falsely supposed to be scientific, which is responsible for this antagonism between the official Church and the vast majority of thoughtful educated men.

That there is some measure of truth in this assertion we have already admitted. But even this was truer

in the past than it is to-day. It is quite true that in the past philosophies abandoned in the higher strata of thought have had a way of gaining a new lease of life in the lower strata, as they have been brought by cheap editions within the reach of the less wealthy classes.

It has, indeed, been said that it takes fifteen years for a new doctrine to permeate the mass of the reading public.

But this is becoming less and less true.

Thought is permeating our whole society to-day far more rapidly than of old. It is a well-known fact, for instance, that before the war M. Bergson's philosophy was being made use of by the French Syndicalists in their propaganda among the masses of the proletariat. And though there are profound differences, in this respect, between the English and the French, no one who reads the *Herald* or the *Labour Leader* can fail to see how eagerly the better minds among our own artisans are reaching out after new knowledge, or how changed in recent years is their attitude towards religion.

So that, while it is still true, in a measure, that philosophic materialism lingers on here and there in the backwaters to which the new philosophy has not reached, this fact does not really account for anything but a fraction of the still widely prevailing indifference to the appeal of the Church.

Is it not a fact of infinitely greater significance that the really effective criticism of materialism is coming, for the most part, not from within the walls of the official Church, but from without those walls ?

Does not this mean—this is what very many, within as well as without, are insistently asking at the present time—that we have built walls which we had better not have built, and that the time has come for us to recognise that those walls are undermined?

III

There is, moreover, another factor in the situation which our apologists are apt to leave out of sight. It is this :

While scientific education has spread within recent years with immense rapidity, so that more and more men are passing through that truth-seeking discipline, our clergy, almost to a man, have been educated on the traditional public-school lines. For them science at school meant “Stinks” (with occasional explosions); at the University, classics, or possibly history, filled such of their time as they gave to reading. With many during all this period the real interest in life lay in their games. They then, some of them, proceeded for a year to a theological college. Then the vast majority of them passed to the absorbing labours of some huge parish, an ever-increasing number of addresses, sermons, and more and more demands upon their time. . . .

And along with this for most of them there has come, with the donning of the clerical costume, that disastrous immunity from friendly criticism¹ which is due in part to the widespread feeling among educated laymen that

¹ They get plenty of unfriendly criticism, usually of a strongly sectarian nature, which naturally only tends to harden them in their own opinions.

it is rather " bad form " to tell a clergyman what you think of his sermons, and in part to the feeling that the parson resents criticism of his pulpit utterances . . . as though he spoke with a kind of divine authority.

So our pulpits are filled for the most part with men who are kept more or less out of touch with the dominant thought of the age, and are prepared, for this very reason, to welcome any book which tells them that that thought is negligible because it has an anti-Christian bias.

They are, therefore, only too apt to seize upon such a book, especially if it makes a considerable display of an acquaintance with modern thought which they know that they themselves do not possess, and after a hasty and quite uncritical reading of it they go on, without a moment's hesitation, to recommend it from the pulpit, often with disastrous results in the case of the more educated members of their congregation.

Should the orthodox apologist be so fortunate as to be able to secure an Episcopal *imprimatur* for his work, in the form of a light-hearted, eulogistic preface, he may be sure that many of the clergy will recommend his book without even reading it. It is only, as a rule, the thoughtful laity and a few recalcitrant clergy, who will stop to enquire what the episcopal preface is really worth.

IV

Now I am not saying that it is necessary that all our clergy should be scientific experts. That, of course, is impossible, even if it were desirable. But

might not much more be done than has been done in the past in the way of arranging lectures for clergy by competent laymen upon the distinctively modern scientific point of view? And might not our pulpits be occupied more and more frequently by laymen? Meanwhile there is assuredly one lesson being dinned into us all—if only we will hear it. And that is the necessity for us to seek reality ourselves at all costs.

Sunday by Sunday, day by day, we are all of us making the most solemn assertions, and often without any apparent sense of their tremendous solemnity.

“I believe in God” . . . There come moments when one seems to feel with a kind of shuddering awe what a stupendous assertion that is . . . and it is only one of a series of propositions hardly less overwhelming.

Surely the spread of the scientific temper ought to force every one of us to the severest self-criticism.

“I believe in this and this.” . . . Do I?

What do I mean by belief? Do I really believe *this*?

If so, on what grounds do I believe it?

What are the logical implications of this belief, in this direction? and in this?

What effect is this belief having upon my own life? and so on.

This kind of self-examination would, it seems to the present writer, be very much more likely to be worth undertaking than a form widely used by the clergy to-day, which begins:—“Have I, through faith, made a sacrifice of my reason to God, by believing firmly, whatever has been held in the Catholic Church,

semper ubique et ab omnibus ? ” . . . at least when this question is interpreted in the traditional manner.

V

No doubt, for most of us, such a method of self-examination honestly, faithfully, and courageously carried out, during long periods of time, must necessarily be very painful until it comes to be the normal attitude of our minds.

We shall find it more and more impossible to be content to hold our religion “in the lump.” In certain directions we shall doubtless become less dogmatic. . . . The kind of people who like their religion given them in a very definite form, so that no demands are made upon them except that of a humble acceptance of all that we choose to tell them, will begin to be restless. We may even “upset” some of the most regular of church-goers. . . . But surely the gain will ultimately outweigh the loss a thousandfold . . . because the truth-seekers will find the reality for which their souls are hungering.

They will find as they sit at our feet that “The Word of God is,” in very deed, in this twentieth century, “living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the feelings and thoughts of the heart.”

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SPIRIT OF DISCRIMINATION

THE really outstanding lessons to be learnt from the attitude of mind which is distinctive of the leaders of scientific thought are faith—*i.e.*, a genuine belief that truth may be discovered and is worth discovering for its own sake; patience—the patience which is a paramount necessity in those who seek to discriminate between truth and falsehood; and humility—the humility which is willing to acknowledge its mistakes and retrace its steps. It is strange how this enumeration suggests Biblical texts as one writes it.

Surely no man who has tried, however cursorily, to keep in some sort of touch with the several movements of scientific thought during the last twenty years can fail to see that this is true. Could such a book as Professor Thomson's astonishing little *Introduction to Science* in the Home University Library have been written twenty, or even ten, years ago? And does not this fact, to begin with, impress upon us the necessity of discrimination in all kinds of ways? We need to take pains to discover who the enemy is before we turn to belabour him, lest in our blind folly we turn our weapons against our own side.

THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING

Before we denounce the philosophy of scientific men we need to discover what that philosophy is. It is no use saying, "This and this is what the scientists tell us, and we won't have it," when the scientists have themselves abandoned the position we are attacking. It is for this reason that the defence of miracles, as being somehow necessary if we are to keep our belief in freedom, seems so foolish and futile in the eyes of those who believe passionately in freedom on quite other grounds.

When a man says to me that "it is only a miracle, revelation, that can assure you that behind all this network of material forces there is a living will,"¹ I can only say, "My dear sir, you are really wrong. The facts of life do not bear you out in your assertion. I believe in the freedom of God and man as passionately as you do, but in the first place I am sure you are wrong when you talk about miracle and revelation as though they were identical. If you will take the trouble to turn to the Gospels again you will find that our common Master never spoke in this way. Nor, again, can it be right to use the term 'miracle' in two or more absolutely and entirely different senses in the same paragraph, as you, I notice, are in the habit of doing. And (thirdly and lastly) my own belief in real freedom for God and man is entirely independent of any such belief in the Gospel miracles as you hold to be essential.

¹ "The Gospel and Human Needs," p. 22.

THE DANGER OF WEAK ARGUMENT

The truth is that for anyone who has really tried to think out the true basis for a belief in freedom this kind of slapdash argument tends to discredit, perhaps unduly, the traditional orthodoxy. I honestly confess that I find myself saying to myself as I read such an argument, "Surely there must be more to be said for the traditional view than this, or it could not have held its ground so long" So again, the habit of discriminating which is engendered by science makes one turn upon oneself to criticise one's own experiences, separating in them the essential from the accidental. My own experience, for instance, gives me a profound belief in the necessity of conversion. I was converted at such a time, by such steps, under such influences . . . and I went forth to preach, with passionate conviction, the need of conversion to others.

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS

But I have come to see that there was an essential and a non-essential element intermingled in my own conversion: an eternal and a temporal. I was converted under the human influence of men of a certain definite school of thought. The spiritual experiences which transformed my whole life were mediated to me along certain definite traditional lines. I passed from unbelief to belief, and with belief to certain practices: I went to sacramental confession, and came to see the profound truths enshrined in the

Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist ; and ever since that time I have preached these things to others, with the conviction, born of my own experience, that along these lines men might be saved. And one result of my preaching has been that by the grace of God out of the congregations to whom I have preached some have come—one here, another there, a dozen at this mission and fifty at that, and so on—to conversion and a new spiritual experience on these lines. They have made their confession and come to love the service of the altar as I had done, and one or two have even passed on to ordination. And these blessed experiences have confirmed in my own mind the validity of these methods for these souls and for others like them. . . .

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

But side by side with this set of experiences, and closely related to them, have come three others at least. First, I have come into personal contact with hundreds of other persons plainly and unmistakably as truly “ converted ” as I am ; men and women often of far deeper spiritual insight and far greater spiritual power than myself, who have come to new life out of death along lines widely different from those along which I have travelled. I have applied to them the only test I find in the Gospels for knowing the true from the false : “ By their fruits ye shall know them,” and I have found in them, beyond all dispute, what St. Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit, “ love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith-

fulness, meekness, temperance," and therefore I am led to believe that the lines along which they have travelled are as valid as those which have brought me to the living Christ. Their scheme has proved its validity for them exactly as my scheme has proved its validity for me. By our different schemes we have arrived at a common experience, a common life.

GOOD SECTARIANS AND BAD CHRISTIANS

Moreover, life has provided me with another lesson. In the course of my ministry I have been brought into contact with many people who have followed my scheme, or a different one, without ever, apparently, having arrived at those experiences which have given these schemes their respective validity for me and for those others. I have met many people who have been, as they would say, "good Catholics" all their lives, some Roman and some Anglican, just as I have met many others who would claim with equal vehemence to be good Protestants, who seem to show in their lives none of the fruits of the Spirit of which St. Paul writes. Many of them have been protagonists, on one side or another, in the field of theological controversy, fighting each for his own scheme as though it were a matter of life or death, commending it by every argument but the one really unanswerable argument of charity.

THE CONVERTED AND EXTERNALS

And, to turn once again to life for its commentary upon my own fundamental experience, I have learnt

this third lesson, perhaps the most illuminating of all. I have seen men plainly and indisputably converted by the grace of God through my ministry, as they would say—men whose life I have seen visibly changed, visibly growing in grace—who have yet never felt themselves called to adopt my external scheme at all. They have never been to confession, do not feel the necessity of communicating fasting, and so on ; and yet one sees in their lives all the fruits of the Spirit.

Now I know, of course, the common talk about God's "uncovenanted mercies" and about His not being bound by His own Sacraments, and the rest ; but that does not seem to me to cover the ground. It has about it an unnatural air as of a theory made to explain away rather than to explain the facts. And indeed it was made to defend a view of Sacraments as necessary to all men—a view, based upon a false exegesis of the Scriptures, of a rigid uniformity of divine method which has really gone the way of all such views, whether applied to the world of nature or the world of grace.

THE FEAR OF THE SACRAMENTALIST

And at the back of the minds of those who resist this really simple, obvious conclusion lies almost always, one finds, fear—the fear lest their particular scheme may be discredited. I know that fear, for I have felt it : the fear of the quite genuine sacramentalist lest somehow the world may decide that sacraments are unnecessary ; the fear lest somehow, if

we begin to criticise and revise our scheme, we shall be robbed of everything we hold most dear. But it is well to remember that fear of this kind is really synonymous with faithlessness. For, as the Apostle said, "God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind."

ST. PAUL AND HIS CONVERTS

Now it is surely—this is my whole point—only a lack of that discriminating spirit which, as I have said, is one of the most obvious fruits of scientific discipline (in the case, at all events, of the great leaders of scientific thought), which leads us so to confuse the essential and non-essential, so to lump them all together and think that they stand or fall the one with the other. It is as though St. Paul after his own conversion had gone forth to preach to others not merely the necessity for conversion, but the necessity that all should set out along the Damascus road. We can see at once that the result of such a preaching, by such a man as St. Paul, would be disastrous. No doubt large numbers of pilgrims would throng the road to Damascus at his bidding; and some of these would no doubt indeed repeat in their measure his experiences. But far more, of equal earnestness and good will, would have to say as they listened to his preaching, "We long to share your experience, but we cannot believe that God really means that we should all do exactly the same thing, or that your spiritual experience is bound up with the external conditions you would impose upon us."

Others, again, of the pilgrims of the road, would no doubt plod earnestly along, expecting the experience which never came ; and though some would doubtless console themselves with the thought that somehow or other all must be well, as they had fulfilled the prescribed conditions, they would in fact be deluded, and many at last would fall a ready prey to some straightforward person who appealed directly to facts. And with their disillusionment in regard to the external conditions there would perish also their faith in the spiritual realities which in St. Paul's case had accompanied these conditions.

So I would urge again this need of a spirit of fearless discrimination, and I would end by urging upon the defenders of orthodoxy that if we go back to the Bible we shall find that this very need for discrimination is preached to us over and over again. We are to "try the spirits whether they be of God," we are to "compare spiritual things with spiritual," for "he that is spiritual judgeth all things"—for indeed discrimination is, as we have already seen, a distinguishing work of the Word of God.

CHAPTER XXV

BELIEVERS AND TRUTH-SEEKERS

“IF you desire peace of soul and happiness, believe !
If you want to be a disciple of truth, search ! ”

So wrote Nietzsche at the age of twenty-one, from the University of Bonn, to his sister, who was anxious about his soul's health.

And who shall deny that there is truth in the distinction which he draws between believers and truth-seekers ? Does not the whole history of religious progress bear witness to a persistent division, down the ages, between those who accept and those who seek : a division never more clearly marked than in our own day ?

Within the Church the vast majority of those who really feel at home there, those whom their clergy describe as “ the faithful,” belong to the first class ; the few, regarded usually with suspicion and dislike, possibly even with fear and contempt, by this majority, belong to the second. These are they who, in so far as they cling to the Church at all, are ever on its circumference, and are often in danger of being pushed out by their “ faithful ” fellows into the great seething

world outside . . . so that, in our own day, you may hardly find one who is really safe within.

So one sits and ponders, and, trying to read the signs of the times without prejudice and without fear, one asks :—Is this division final ? Is it never to be transcended ? There is much undoubtedly to lead one to take that view.

(1) On the one hand, the conservatism of the Church seems to be a necessity for its continual existence. It is the only guarantee of any real continuity.

The Church is bound to maintain as vital the belief that the Divine has really and truly been revealed in the past : that the truth has not been left for the twentieth century to discover for the first time : that there is already unveiled, and already, in one supreme instance, attained, the topmost summit in the great range of religious possibility . . . Love, which cannot be transcended, since it is as broad and deep and high as the universe itself. For this assurance that the secret of the universe is now an open secret, a “mystery” that “hath been revealed,” that it only remains for each redeemed soul to make progress through the various stages of life’s initiation until it has at last made that secret the secret of its own activities, the Church has ever stood and must ever stand, resisting to the death any view of life that is incompatible with this.

What room then for further truth-seeking, in the realm of religion, and what has religion to do with any experiment but this ? Accept this truth and seek to live it out : “Love and do what you like” : so shall you find “peace in believing.” “If you

desire peace of soul and happiness, believe!" The Church does seem to stand for conservatism in religion.

(2) Again, the Church is bound to warn each soul that there are some things which must not be made a matter for experiment, since experiment can only lead to disaster. There are some experiences which are only to be purchased at the cost of forgoing other experiences which are better worth having: that "to know something of the jolly wholesome satisfaction that a hungry pig must find in its wash,"¹ may be, probably is, possible for all of us without serious loss, but that there are certain abstinences which must be rigidly observed if we would enjoy certain higher and essentially contradictory delights: that there is a virginity of soul which once lost can never be wholly recovered: that by opening some doors you necessarily close others: that when Mr. Bernard Shaw says, "Never resist temptation, prove all things, hold fast that which is good,"² he is not only preaching what he does not practise—like so many other pulpit orators, of whom he is chief—but preaching something which is truly dangerous to others and must also make it impossible for him to gain the ear of some people as earnest as himself, whose ear would be worth gaining.

Here again then, in the moral world, the Church stands for conservatism.

(3) Moreover, this conservatism of the Church answers to a realised need of the soul. Is there any one of

¹ H. G. Wells. "First and Last Things," p. 60.

² Bernard Shaw. "Man and Superman," p. 227.

us who is a stranger to the suspicion that the unknown will prove to be the unwelcome ?

There is a deeply grounded (and not altogether unreasonable) fear in most men's hearts that change for them must be change for the worse. And this fear is more powerful in the religious world than anywhere else.

It is not simply the ignoble unwillingness of "the comfortable Christian, snugly wrapped in the decent blankets of tradition,"¹ to turn out into a cold world where a cruel east wind is blowing, that makes us undesirous of change. It is often, at any rate, the less unworthy fear, born of a real, if imperfect humility, lest we should lose the substance for the shadow, or venture rashly into temptation to which God is not calling us.

The east wind of intellectual criticism is undoubtedly dangerous to some whose mental constitution is delicate. We have no right to fling ourselves down from the pinnacle of the Temple in the vain hope that God will send His angels to save us from the results of our own presumptuous rashness.

(4) And, yet again, "to be a disciple of truth" may be very well for those leisured people who can sit for long hours reading and thinking, but how shall we, whose life is so filled with the busy performance of tasks, less inspiring perhaps but none the less necessary, find time for so arduous a search ? It may be necessary for the few—this search after truth—for us it cannot be necessary. Our humble part is to accept, and by acceptance find "peace of soul

¹ "The Spiral Way." By John Cordelier. P. 91.

and happiness." And that we may be taunted with shirking difficulties and choosing the easier path is only confirmation of our conviction, for herein are we followers of Him who bore the taunts and jibes of His fellows. Here is our opportunity of learning from Him who, "when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." The world, insolent in its intellectual superiority, may despise us as weaklings . . . we triumph over its scorn by welcoming it, and pass through it, conscious that we too are treading the *Via dolorosa* in a steadfast adherence to "the faith once for all delivered to the Saints."

(5) So, on the one hand, the conservatism of the majority seems to find for itself a justification in life.

And yet we are conscious that there is much more to be said. After all it is not true that all truth has been revealed. The Scripture itself tells us that we are to expect, as the truth-seekers of all ages expect, to be led into all truth. And day by day the world marches forward in discovery, led often, almost always indeed in these days, by men for whom apparently the official Church has no room. It is these men who, in their search after truth, have turned their keen and fearless eyes upon our traditional beliefs and sought to probe our untested acceptances. It is they who are trying to carry out the Apostolic injunction, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." And it is to these men, rather than to the official leaders of religion, that the world is turning more and more for guidance in its doubts and perplexities, because

it feels that these men have the wherewithal to satisfy its hunger. It is their spirit which is slowly but surely permeating every class in our own nation, yes, and every nation in the world.

The charcoal burners of a previous age, unable to read and write, accepted what their Church told them, because it was she alone who loved them well enough to seek to bring them any light at all in their darkness. Their sons to-day have been given, as the most glorious fruit of the labours of the Church itself, power in a limited but rapidly increasing measure to seek after truth for themselves. Already they are beginning to enter into the heritage of the world's thought : to find entrance to realms where new discoveries await them every day.

Are we, who have led them to the door, to forbid them to open it ? Are we to hold our own mysteries in terror, as though some Bluebeard's charnel-house was all that awaited the discovery of those curious ones to whom we ourselves have committed the key ?

(6) So we arrive apparently at this conclusion. The Church, bound by the very nature of the task entrusted to her to be conservative, has somehow or other become the very Mother of unrest. In her effort to win her children's love she has nourished in them a divine discontent.

She is herself, in very deed, the mystic pelican : and feeding her young on her very substance has, in thus giving life to others, apparently sacrificed her own life. For she is plainly no longer able to satisfy the very appetites she has herself created.

But does not this picture of the mystic pelican contain

the real solution of the problem. For the Mother who seems to die does indeed live in her children. It is from her that they took their origin. It is she also who has nourished and sustained them; and now she must be content, nay, she must rejoice, to see them go forth bearing her life in their veins, to find nourishment and sustenance in the great world without.

And this is exactly what our truth-seekers are doing. They are the believers who have grown up: nothing more or less than that. It is belief and only belief, nay more, it is that ancient belief in the Truth for which the Church stands, which has driven them forth to seek for themselves the sustenance which their Mother is no longer able to supply.

They are not really cut off from her. She lives in them. They owe, in the last resort, all to her. And they themselves will go on, in obedience to the urgent demands of that very life they have received from her, to bear offspring of their own . . . offspring who will necessarily begin by a bare acceptance and end by becoming seekers of new truth for themselves.

So it is, surely, that the distinction of Nietzsche is transcended. All need belief, all need peace and happiness of soul, which comes from belief; but it is belief which drives men forth to seek new truth.

No one can become a seeker who does not believe in the truth. In seeking new truth he is only putting faith into practice, and therefore only so is he treading the path which can bring him "peace of soul and happiness."

And on the other hand those who feel that they can

never be other than the humble accepters of truth, must be humble enough to accept the new truth which these others discover. They must not set bounds to truth and claim that nothing true exists beyond the range of their necessarily narrow vision.

And somehow or other they too must escape from a bare acceptance which is the negation of true faith. Somehow or other, in the practical course of life, they must translate the theoretical teaching of the Church into the reality of a life of love issuing, as living love must, in self-giving for others. For only as they somehow or other give independent life to others can they continue themselves to live. . . . So they too may become truth-seekers in the broad realm of practical life, without being pioneers of intellectual truth.

So it seems that in the Church of the future there will still continue upon the surface the ancient distinction between believers and seekers; yet that distinction will be transcended in a growing realisation of the truth that all honest seekers are fundamentally believers, and that all true believers are committed by their old belief to new acceptances, and to a practical life which is after all only the verification of truth by experience.

CHAPTER XXVI

ADVENTURES IN THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN

THE best teacher in the world is personal experience ; the second best the experiences of others studied at second hand. It is in this belief that this chapter is written and for the sake of directness written in the first person.

I began my experience of Sunday School work some twenty-four years ago, in one of the great cities of the north. At that time it was the custom for one or two boys in the Sixth Form of the Grammar School of the town to go down on Sundays to teach in the Sunday School of a certain rather famous mission chapel in one of the poorest districts of the city. I well remember being asked by the Captain of the School Football XV., when he was on the point of going up to the University, whether I would take on his Sunday School class when he left.

My first feeling was a pleasant sense of gratification that he (a hero in my eyes) should have selected me as his successor. My second was a sense of complete

and entire unfitness for the work. Memory, or possibly imagination, reconstructs the dialogue which followed, in this fashion.

MYSELF : I'm afraid I should make an awful mucker of it. I shouldn't know what to teach.

MY HERO : Rot ! It's quite easy really. The chief job is to keep order, but that isn't really so difficult after a bit. (*I ought to mention here that my hero was a man of unusual brawn and muscle ; I was not.*)

MYSELF : What should I have to teach them, even if I could keep order ?

MY HERO (*vaguely*) : Oh, old Tadders'll tell you. I've been teaching them the Gospel for each week. (*Old Tadders was the youthful and quite inexperienced curate in charge of the Sunday School.*)

Well, in the end hero-worship and the pride engendered thereby overcame well-founded scruples—founded, indeed, on self-knowledge—and I decided to tackle the job.

Then followed a few days later an interview with the Rev. Theophilus Tadders, at his house. It was somewhat on these lines, if memory is not at fault : I was warmly welcomed by the gentleman in question, who, when I modestly informed him that I had come to offer my services, in room of the departing teacher, ejaculated, “ Good egg ! ” and smacked me genially on the back. I murmured something to the effect that I knew nothing about teaching, and had no idea what or how to teach. This did not seem to worry Mr. Tadders at all. “ Oh ! that's all right,” said he. “ You needn't worry about that. Your chief job will be to keep order. They're rather a tough lot o

nippers. You just try and get some order and discipline into them."

"Yes," I said, "Morrison told me that would be the chief job, but I suppose I ought to teach them something."

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Tadders, "give the young beggars a jolly good shaking up first, and then when you've knocked some discipline into 'em perhaps they'll attend to your lesson."

"What lesson do you want me to teach?"

Mr. Tadders ran his fingers through his abundant hair, glanced at the clock (he was a very busy curate), and said vaguely: "Oh! teach 'em the Gospel for the day, or something of the sort, but your first job will be to keep the beggars in order."

Here let me say that I do not wish to convey a false impression of Mr. Tadders, whose friendship I still prize. He was then a typical Junior Curate trying to do, among a host of other things, a job for which he had had no training at all. He is now a distinguished and popular dignitary, who has done such work for the Church as the present writer could never hope to rival.

Well, the following Sunday, armed with a Prayer Book and a meagre knowledge of the Gospel for the day, gleaned from a hasty perusal of the Comments thereon in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, I presented myself at the Sunday School in excellent time.

The Superintendent, one of the best and kindest of men, welcomed me warmly, took me to my class, and introduced me to some dozen or more ruffians,

nearly as old as myself, with whom I proceeded to make friends, on the basis of mutual interest in the doings of the local football team. Instinct, and instinct alone, pointed to this basis. It was the only basis possible.

Soon afterwards we had opening prayers, and then the Superintendent returned to tell me that two other teachers had failed to turn up, and he must amalgamate their classes with mine for the morning. So I found myself face to face with some thirty boys, of ages varying from eleven to sixteen years, all untamed, none, as was soon apparent, thirsting to listen to the comments of the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges on the Gospel for the Day.

On the other hand, they were all thirsting for any kind of diversion, and when I had quelled an incipient free fight at one end of the class I found another in progress at the other end. I began to understand the insistent emphasis on discipline of my predecessor and the curate. I understood it better when Mr. Tadders himself appeared. The biggest boy in the class (a fishmonger's assistant, clad in a blue jersey, which clothed him on Sunday as throughout the week, and proclaimed his occupation to the nostrils of anyone within twenty yards) greeted the curate warmly. He dug him in the ribs with a fishy thumb, ejaculating, "Eh, Tadders, ye're gettin' reet fat!" Mr. Tadders turned upon him with fierce anger, told him to behave himself and passed on with all speed to another class, leaving me to cope with the untamed mob. It was not long before my fishmonger challenged another boy to a fight, and it appeared to me that the only

thing to do was to dispense with his unwelcome presence. I, therefore, told him to go. He, on the other hand, was quite happy where he was, and refused to budge, whereupon I seized him by the scruff of the neck and ran him out of the school, applying my knee from time to time to that portion of his person nearest to me, as he resisted eviction. This proceeding deeply wounded his pride, and he burst forth, " Ah've got a big bruther as is a bobby. Ah'll fetch 'im to tha. Ah we'ant have tha kickin' me. Ah'll fetch my big bruther ! " and so on till the door was shut in his face.

So much for my introduction to Sunday School work. My subsequent experiences in this school can be passed over rapidly, for I remember but little of them, and I am sure that the boys entrusted to my care must remember less. I do remember learning that it was not wise to order a large and fat boy to stand on the form as a punishment for bad behaviour. He refused to obey and when I made a dive at him, seized him round the thighs, and lifted him, struggling violently, on to the form, the achievement did not conduce to order in the school ! The keeping of order did indeed become easier when the football season came round, and I found myself in the School XV., and my name occasionally found its way into the sporting columns of the local press. It was then that I made the compact that if the boys would patiently suffer my dull expositions of Holy Writ (still extracted week by week from the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges) for twenty minutes, they should be permitted to discuss the more thrilling subject of local football for the remainder of the time. " No

lesson, no football discussion," became as a law of the Medes and Persians.

I remember also the day when the Vicar of the parish (now a revered Bishop) came silently into the school, and stood immediately behind my chair to my exceeding discomfort, and how I promptly set my astonished boys to read a chapter of the Bible, verse by verse, while I devoutly prayed that by the time the chapter was finished the awe-inspiring presence would have vanished !

If my boys learnt nothing at that school I certainly learnt a good deal. I began to learn, for instance, how not to get order in a school class ; how not to teach scripture : I learnt how much the bad boy of one walk in life resembles the bad boy in another walk—this from the likeness between my boys and myself ! Chiefly and briefly I learnt that teaching was an art which I had not begun to master, and that Sunday Schools on the lines of that one involved a vast expenditure of energy with little visible result.

The next landmark in my progress as a Sunday School teacher was a lecture at Wells, where I was at that time a theological student, by the Rev. Spencer Jones, on the Method of St. Sulpice, which thrilled me through and through. I shall never forget how he formed us into an imaginary class of children ; made us answer questions with complete statements embracing a whole truth :

Q. : What is grace ?

A. : Grace is help and strength freely given us by God.

And then, treating us as an infants' class, he called

upon us to repeat jingles such as this one, which has stuck ever since in my usually unretentive memory :

“Speak, for thy servant heareth,”

Were the words little Samuel said.

“Obey !” is the lesson of Samuel,

As he listens intently in bed.

Then came my ordination and first curacy, and I was given charge of some 400 babies under twelve years of age, at a Junior Catechism (in a large Mission Chapel), while a colleague took some 600 others in the Senior Catechism, at the parish church.

What fun it was ! Week after week one got out one's three points for the instruction, one scorched round on a bicycle to the chosen children with the set questions ; one cudgelled one's brains for rhymes, one made up thrilling homilies about Tommy and Mary, who were only saved from becoming impossible prigs when Lent came round and they had to be extremely naughty in order that they might learn how to repent. I well remember my teachers' relief when Tommy became a real boy at last, and stole a penny, bought cigarettes with it, was first sick, then remorseful, and at last (under the life-giving influence of the imaginary and ideal curate of his parish) was brought to true repentance !

How popular I was, too, at this time with my day-school teachers ! Diocesan inspectors lost all their terrors. Every subject had its own separate catechism of questions and answers, for was not the power of memorising the chief intellectual power of childhood ? So with really indefatigable industry I drew up a

catechism on the Acts of the Holy Apostles, another on the Sacraments, yet another on the Baptismal Service, and so on and so forth. And when "the day" at last arrived—a day which I would have toasted as eagerly as any Prussian officer—when the inspector came he was welcomed with open arms, and, with consummate tact on the part of the head-mistress, he was informed that Mr. Matthews had taught such and such a subject. "Then perhaps Mr. Matthews would like to ask the class a few questions, while I listen?" This was exactly what Mr. Matthews was there for. Out came the questions, "What happened on the Day of Pentecost?" Every hand in the class eagerly stretched itself heavenwards. "Well, Mary, you tell us." "On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended on the waiting Apostles." "What is the Day of Pentecost sometimes called?" "The Day of Pentecost is sometimes called the Birthday of the Church," and so on. Every hand up! Every child's memory stocked with truth in tabloid form, ready for use in every emergency of later life. What a vision of the Church of the future in that parish filled the mind of the enthusiastic curate, and soon almost equally enthusiastic inspector, whose reports reached the utmost limits of eulogistic language. Alack-a-day! Where are those children now? How many of them have indeed retained a memory of those old lessons? How many have bridged the gulf between things learnt by heart and things practised in life? Certainly the method—the only method!—had its strong points, and one humbly hopes that no enthusiastic work among children is ever wholly thrown away;

but the fact remains, I fear, that only a tiny proportion of those so taught became in fact the faithful and instructed Churchpeople of whom one's dreams were so full. And those faithful ones—were they not, after all, in most cases the least active-minded; belonging to a type which is less common than it once was and is not likely to grow more common as “knowledge grows from more to more,” the type which accepts without question whatever it is taught with sufficient dogmatic assurance on the part of the teacher?

There is no doubt that, in capable hands, “the method” produces wonderful temporary results. The sight of five hundred children, conducted by the up-raised hand of the catechist, the feeling of thoroughness and painstaking which it inspires—all these are good, but the fatal defect of treating children of from twelve to seventeen as though they were all alike, and all at the same level of attainment—a defect due to the imperfect understanding of child psychology on the part of the originators of the method—made its abandonment, or at least its drastic reformation, as certain as, I believe, it was well-advised.

And even such child psychology as one had learnt in those days one so often misapplied. To hold the attention of the children, to keep them interested, that even now is far too often the test applied to the Services and Instructions for Children. The casual visitor sees a huge congregation of children hanging upon the words and gestures of an enthusiastic curate, and is filled with wonder and admiration. Too rarely does he go on to ask, “What is it which is holding the attention? Is it the essential? Is it the picture or

the thing the picture is meant to teach ? ” I well remember giving a lesson on the Epiphany to a school in Australia and illustrating it by a lightning sketch of a camel on the blackboard. The children were enthralled, the rector of the parish enthusiastic, but I learnt what I hope was a salutary lesson, when I found a few months later that the whole point of the lesson had vanished from the children’s minds, and that I myself was remembered merely as “ the bloke what drew a camel.”

But now those happy days when one was a light-hearted and irresponsible curate are left behind, never to return ; and, as vicar of a large parish, one rejoices in the enthusiasm and the growing efficiency of the new school of curates, with their greatly improved methods—their graded lessons, their models and modelling classes, and all the paraphernalia at which old-fashioned Sunday School teachers can scarce forbear to sneer. A future age, no doubt, will find much to satirise and much to amend even in these methods, but one great superiority of present over past methods consists in the recognition of the fact that we have not already attained the best possible method but are committed to what is really the only method in these days :—the method of progress through constant experiment and equally constant self-criticism, in the light of new and ever-growing knowledge of child psychology.

The particular new methods are still in their infancy, but the real difficulty now facing the teacher is less how to teach than what to teach. There is a growing feeling among the best teachers, especially perhaps

the best teachers in secondary schools—in those for girls no less than, perhaps even more than, in those for boys—that the old orthodoxy, even though it be taught by the best modern methods, is no longer able to hold the allegiance of the more thoughtful children. Above all, there is on all sides growing dissatisfaction with the conventional preparation of candidates for Confirmation. The old external and mechanical presentation of the Sacraments; their value *ex opere operato*, as so often taught by the clergy, makes almost no appeal to our modern children, so ably and so rightly taught, by highly trained teachers, to think for themselves. Yet I am quite certain that the Sacraments of the Church make their proper appeal when they are presented to children as having their appointed and supremely natural place in a life which is first and last essentially sacramental.¹ So too children are far more ready to take part in the worship of the Church when it is presented to them as no mere unmeaning duty which is to be performed because the Church teaches its necessity, but rather as the true climax and inspiration of the life of service, the only kind of life worth living.

There is indeed no more vitally important question at the present time than this question of the religious teaching of our boys and girls. Here, as everywhere else in the ecclesiastical sphere, what is needed above all else is courageous faith in the truth: here, as

¹ For the view of the Sacraments, and especially of the Eucharist, held by the present writer, see "The Faith of an Average Man" (Arnold), Chapters xv. and xx., and "Concerning Prayer" (Macmillan), Essay IX.

elsewhere, there are too many ecclesiastics, content to patronise new methods, but too timid and too fundamentally faithless to face the real problems which confront the modern teacher. One thing remains certain—the old bottles cannot much longer withstand the pressure of the new wine.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

I HOPE that no thoughtful reader of this book will accuse its authors of disloyalty to the Church of England. There are some people, I am well aware, who are filled with indignation when any son of the Church fearlessly criticises the ecclesiasticism of the day. I would humbly beg any such person who may have read so far to remember that, though we be neither prophets nor the sons of prophets, yet this is precisely the charge which was brought against all the prophets of the Old Testament and, indeed, has been brought against the prophets in every age since. It is, indeed, only through frank and fearless criticism by those whose criticism is prompted by love that the Church has ever made progress in any age.

I confess that I at least (and I think I may speak for those who have joined with me in writing this book) have no kind of belief that true love is blind. The instinctive love of a child too young to understand one thought in his mother's mind is indeed blind: blind too is the calf-love of a hobbledehoy for the

temporary object of his affections, but there is no blindness in the mature love of a full-grown man for the mother who bore him or the wife who is far dearer to him than any other person in the world.

So I plead that it is love, deep and genuine, for the truth and the Church which lives by truth, which has prompted the writing of this book.

Indeed, if I may speak for myself, I cannot believe that there is any living soul who loves the dear old Church of England more passionately than I do. I owe to her my life and my soul. I recognise and revere the deep piety, the wonderful self-sacrifice, the zeal and humility, the kindliness and brotherliness of innumerable Church people. I should be sorry indeed if I were accused of blindness to that which is good in the Church. More than this, I believe that every man, woman and child in England who desires a true and vital religion could find it within her fold and would find it but for our sins, who are responsible for making her voice heard by the common people who desire to hear it.

It is because we love the Church so much : it is because we so eagerly desire to see her become what we are absolutely convinced she might become—the Church of the English people—that we, who have joined in writing this book, simply long for a revival of spiritual life, a breaking down of the man-made barriers which, as we believe, are keeping her true sons away from her.

I, at least, cannot be content with the attitude of some of my brethren. “ The Church never has been the Church of the masses and we have no reason to

suppose that she was ever meant 'to be.' Those words have been actually said to me more than once. To me they are—I speak frankly—the words of utter unfaithfulness. I myself have been accused by certain of my clerical critics of “unfaithfulness.” I answer that my faith in the Church is so great that many of my brethren laugh at it as altogether impossible.

It is true, of course, that, even if the Church reforms herself, not all men will welcome her and enter her fold. But if she were really true to her Master I believe that she would draw to herself *all men of good will*, all men and women who care for high and noble causes, all who are looking and longing and working for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. She would draw those who do homage to the character of Christ. So often to-day, it is just these she repels. Moreover, the Church, really living with the Spirit of Christ, would assuredly be stirring great passions. Rack-renting landlords and sweating employers could not possibly be, as is so often the case to-day, church officials. Evil men would hate her, instead of patronising her, and, above all, the poor would be found within her gates rather than the rich. How easily and with what comfort to themselves do those that have riches occupy the chief seats in our churches to-day!

Over against the Church as she is I cannot help setting, in my mind's eye, the Church as I see her in my visions. I see a Church putting her trust, not in a Scheme to which all men are expected to conform, but in a frank and quite fearless recognition of reality—the real life, the real needs, the real aspirations,

of real men and women, and, above all, in the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit. I see a Church in which the great dogmas of religion will be presented in relation to the life of the day, to a truth-seeking people, by men of whom only one thing will be asked—that they should speak with absolute sincerity out of the conviction born of experience, for in this Church sincerity will be accounted more important than orthodoxy.

That means of course a Church in which only those will preach who feel that they have a message to deliver. There will be a complete end of discourses delivered by overworked table-servers, who have answered a despairing query, "What on earth shall I preach about next Sunday?" by a hasty perusal of some commentary on the Gospel for the day and the jotting down of an "introduction," three pointless "points," and a "conclusion."

Indeed, in the ideal Church, worship and prayer and counsel, rather than preaching, will occupy the central place, and there will be a variety, not only as between church and church, but within each parish church, far greater than any that we see to-day. The ideal of one type of service for everybody will be definitely abandoned, because it will be recognised that as true human development has resulted in an ever richer differentiation of human types, and as education has widened and will widen its bounds to meet the variety of new professions open to men and women, so some men will always require one type of service and others another to meet their needs. And Father A. will come to rejoice when he sees that Mr.

B. can meet the needs of people he himself could never touch, and Mr. B. will weep with joy at the thought of souls saved by Father A. whom he could not help, and that which will happen to the parties in the Church will become true of the relation of church and church. Only, of course, before this can be, all men of earnestness and zeal will be filled and converted by the new Spirit which is already stirring within the Church in answer to our prayers—the Spirit of fellowship which will break down our man-built middle walls of partition—as the same Spirit broke them down in the day of St. Paul—and will send us out in due time, as it sent him out, to save the world.

For, indeed, the most hopeful sign of our times is this revival in a new form of the ancient and characteristically Christian spirit of fellowship. Men are beginning to learn from life—that is, in truth, from Him who is the Life—that it is vain to hanker after the restoration of fellowship in its primitive form. A Church numbering millions of souls drawn from all nations and classes of men cannot possibly attain to such a uniformity of external expression as was perfectly natural, indeed inevitable, in the case of a Church numbering a few thousands drawn for the most part from people of one class and temperament. It is life which—it is the Lord of life who—has broken down one after another the externalisms of an earlier age when they have served their temporary purpose.

And now we see life evolving new forms of fellowship suited to its new conditions. The direction of movement is quite clear. The attempt to attain a new

uniformity in place of the old has been proved to be quite vain. But everywhere on the one hand you see separated groups of men drawing together, feeling after a larger unity within which they may be included while still retaining those characteristics which led them in the first instance to separate from a body which allowed their deeper life no full play. On the other hand, within the more ancient historic religious organisations, such as our own Church, you find the increasing tendency to form groups and fellowships loyal to the Church as a whole yet realising, as a smaller circle within the larger one, a closer spiritual intimacy than is possible for a community of vast numbers as a whole. And these smaller circles overlap one another and their members intermingle one with another in such a way as is obviously making for a fuller and richer conception of fellowship than the Church has ever yet achieved. If only we can look to the past to discover not the temporary form but the eternal Spirit, we shall then turn with sure faith to the tasks which lie to our hands in the present and become filled with an enthusiastic hope for a future embodiment of the Kingdom of God on earth, fuller and more truly adequate than any that the past can show us.

So again, I see a Church where men will be deliberately led to seek a vision of a new social order ; where the fact that four families are living in a five-roomed house will be thought more terrible than the fact (so distressing at present to Father A.) that Mr. B. has no candles on his " Holy Table " and faces south instead of east, or the other fact (so distressing to Mr. B.) that Father A. has incense in his church and wears

“popish” vestments. The new spirit will set the Church once more turning the world upside down, and will cast out the spirit of the Evil One which too often to-day succeeds in turning the Church upside down over some trifle that has loomed too large in the eyes of men not committed to a great enough cause. Moreover, in the coming age, I cannot help feeling that to do “Church work” will mean something very different from what the phrase means to-day. The Church with a real social mission will cease to restrict the term “spiritual” to those practices on which our Lord laid least emphasis. It will seek to train its eager younger members to tackle fearlessly the real problems of the life of the poor—the vast moral and social problems which can only be safely and adequately dealt with by men and women of consecrated life. . . . The clergy house of the large town parish will no longer contain a body of men all doing, each in his own district, the same jobs ; each expected (whatever his gifts) to preach, teach, visit, say offices, run clubs, prepare confirmation candidates and a hundred other things. We shall recognise, in a way hardly dreamed of at present, the real diversities of gifts of individual men and set them free to do that which they can do best ; and to draw to themselves and guide those younger folk who can best help them in their particular task. . . .

The note, then, of the Church of my vision will be a Catholicity which is inclusive rather than exclusive : a zeal which will work itself out, “according to knowledge,” in all kinds of consecrated activities. In worship and in life the aim of uniformity will be alto-

gether discarded and the ideal of a rich variety within an ever-expanding unity will take its place.

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And so we bring our book to an end. We have tried, each one of us, to set down in absolute sincerity and simplicity what we believe to be the truth, in love and loyalty to the Master Who gave His life for us. May He accept our work in spite of those many imperfections in it of which we are aware and those to which we ourselves are blind, and use it to His own glory and the advancement of His Church in this dear land.

EPILOGUE ¹

God built Him a temple upon the earth.
And He made the foundations thereof in a land of brightness,
where all the year is summer.
Of the finest granite were the deep foundations, and the
pillars without were of polished marble.
And the lines of the temple were of exceeding beauty, and
the grandeur of its courts was unmatched through all
the heavens.
Its walls were of ruby and sapphire, and its ceilings of ivory
and gold.
All precious stones and every sparkling gem adorned it.
And it was full of colour and splendour, perfect as an
unbroken rainbow, various in wonder, multitudinous
in marvel of thought.
And the building thereof took the space of ten thousand
centuries.
But when it was finished there was silence, and in the
oppression of its emptiness there was pain ;
For there was no soul upon earth to see and comprehend
it, and commune with the Maker.
And God breathed His spirit upon the forms of matter,
and man arose from the dust of the earth.
And man became conscious, and looked for powers greater
than himself.

By permission from "Psalms of the West." Published by
Messrs. Longmans.

And as man grew in mind and heart, he saw that a mighty one was the Father of all.

And every man in his zeal and after his own imagination ran to the temple and pulled down the precious stones, and laid its glory in ruins,

And built in every place a house of worship, and each congregation held sacred the stones of its own house, but scorned the Churches of strangers.

And many fought and were slain because other men had not the same precious stones for their sanctuary, and for thousands of years they warred fiercely for this cause.

But at length they humbled their blind pride, and began to see that all places had some remnant of the temple of God.

And they began to gather up the fragments from all quarters, and to set them together, and to discover the plan of the cathedral of all souls.

And peace and wisdom began to descend upon mankind as they built their church of humanity.

And it became their house of God for ever, the home of kindness, the abode of verity.

And it was open and broad as heaven.

And it exceeded the temple of jewels as light exceedeth the brazen vessel of a lamp ;

For it was raised by love and composed of the true thoughts of all generations, and the stones thereof were the hearts of saints.

ROLLO RUSSELL.

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Faith or fear?

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